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The Dialogue Journal-Sketchbook in Art Education: Developing Creative Abilities in Art Students through Mutually Self-Reflective Dialogues Between Teacher and Student.

Michael Collins

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

December, 2001

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ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Journal-Sketchbook in Art Education: Developing Creative Abilities in Art Students through Mutually Self-Reflective Dialogues Between Teacher and Student.

Michael Collins, Ph.D.

Concordia University, 2001

My thesis elucidates an attempt to make mutually reflective creative dialogues about art making, between student participants and their instructor(s), a more conscious practice in art-education studio classrooms. It builds its conclusions through the methodology of dialogue journal research, ethnographic case construction and narrative inquiry.

Art educators have been interested in the role that reflective thinking plays in creativity. My study confirms that role and suggests that models of creative thinking and reflective thinking run on parallel lines. It proposes that reflective thinking and creative art making are functions of the "personal narrative" of the participant. My thesis suggests that Art Education research in these areas needs to expand its approach to incorporate narrative inquiry methods if it wishes to further open up the creative possibilities for the student and the teacher to employ reflective practice in the studio classroom.

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Table of Contents	Page
List of Tables	x
List of Illustrations	x
A Guide to Reading this Thesis	xv
 Chapter One: the Inarticulate Artist	 1
A. Introduction	1
B. The inarticulate artist	1
C. The art education question: "How can student-artists develop creative reflective dialogues?"	2
 Chapter Two: Pictures, Words and Numbers: The Literature Review	 9
A. Introduction	9
B. Artists' sketchbooks and journals	10
C. Dialogue journals and the dialogue journal sketchbook	15
D. Reflective and mutually reflective thinking	19
E. Creativity, dialogue and mutual reflective thinking	24
F. Reaching an understanding through mutual reinterpretation: the process of narrative inquiry in a dialogue	32
G. Words and images in the dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges	38
H. The role of an "Exemplary" teaching practice	43

Chapter Three: Doing It: The Methodology of the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project	46
A. Paradigmatic and grounding presumptions	46
B. Collecting empirical material	50
C. Site variations	51
D. The focus of the exchanges	53
E. My response	54
F. Participant Summary Essays	54
G. Reflecting on the empirical material	54
H. Constructing narratives from the DJSB exchange	67
I. Building the narrative dimension of the DJSB exchanges through summaries of the codes.	69
J. Pattern identification and emergent narrative	79
K. Some conclusions foreshadowed-one clear success	81
L. The follow up interviews	82
M. Emergent themes following on the interviews	83
N. Assessing the participants in terms of creative and mutual reflective thinking in art making.	83
 Chapter Four: I Went Back to Montreal: Narratives and Interviews at the Concordia site	 89
A. Introduction	89
B. “Hubert”: prologue	90
C. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Hubert: a grand vision	91
D. Hubert’s interview	110
E. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Sharon: Mars and Venus opposed	114
F. Sharon’s interview	146

G. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Marie: the grieving artist	152
H. Marie's interview	173
I. Emerging themes at the Concordia site	178
 Chapter Five: The Life Path: Narratives and Interviews at the Sheridan Site	 182
A. Introduction	182
B. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Joey R: rebellion in heaven	182
C. Joey R's interview	200
D. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Alice: life paths	207
E. Alice's interview	232
F. Emerging themes and variations at the Sheridan site	240
 Chapter Six: The Search for the Self: Narratives and Interviews at the UTM/Sheridan Site	 244
A. The UTM/Sheridan site	244
B. Alida's narrative: frames of reference	244
C. Alida's interview	278
D. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Opal: mapping the past	286
E. Opal's interview	308
F. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Sal: little people	317
G. Sal's interview	332
H. Emerging themes and further variations at The UTM/Sheridan site	339
 Chapter Seven: Emergent Themes in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Narratives and Interviews	 344
A. Introduction	344

B. The narrative case study helped develop trust and also provoked resistance	344
C. “Plot” as a concept was useful in understanding the movement of the DJSB exchange	345
D. Anxiety was an ongoing component of the DJSB exchange	348
E. Self-disclosure and a shared worldview supported trust in the DJSB exchange	349
F. The “school” context diminished trust and self-disclosure and increased pressure for compliance	351
G. Time was a constraint and timing and readiness were important to success or failure in the DJSB exchange	352
H. Personal narrative history over-determined the outcome of the DJSB project	353
I. Problem finding and problem solving were over-determined by personal narrative history	355
J. Text solidified image in the DJSB process	356
K. The interview continued the DJSB exchange process but in a new context	356
L. Art making made use of reverie mostly through the sketching process	357
M. Modeling a language of self-reflection was a primary activity of the teacher	357
N. Gender issues emerged but did not take center stage in the DJSB exchange	358
O. Chance occurrences played an important role in the success or failure of the DJSB	359
P. The DJSB had “therapeutic” impact on some participants	359
Q. All of the participants expressed resistance to what I perceived as the significance of the teacher’s role in the DJSB exchange.	360
R. The participant involvement in a regular sketchbook practice was a function of their school context not personal commitment	361

S. Art making themes were controlled in part by the site constraints	361
Chapter Eight: Assessing Participant Creativity and Reflective Thinking in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project Assignments to each participant.	362
A. Introduction	362
B. Creativity, reflectivity and reverie in the DJSB exchanges: the view from the narrative case studies	364
C. An Assessment of the participants' creative and reflective activity in the DJSB based on the narrative case studies	373
D. Reconsidering my categorizations and rankings following the interviews	379
Chapter Nine: Success and Failure in the DJSB Exchanges	392
A. Introduction	392
B. Narrative inquiry and the importance of personal narrative history in re-storying	394
C. The emergent role of "trust" in the DJSB exchange	398
D. The roles of chance and readiness	400
E. Practices within the DJSB	401
F. My own Practices in the DJSB exchange as exemplary	407
G. The school context	412
H. Implications for further research	413
I. The long view	418
Bibliography	420

List of Tables

Table One: A ranking of the participants in creative and reflective activity in the DJSB	378
Table Two: Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the participants	379
Table Three: Post interview ranking of participants creative reflectivity in the DJSB	389
Table Four: Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the participants	390

List of Illustrations

Hubert One: Voting Booth	92
Hubert Two: Installation Idea	95
Hubert Three: Voting Booth	97
Hubert Four: Mac Ideas	98
Hubert Five: Mac Idea 2	101
Hubert Six: Cultural Box	103
Hubert Seven: Installation View 2	104
Hubert Eight: Final Sketch Cultural Box	106
Hubert Nine: Installation View Three (Final)	107
Sharon One: Water	116
Sharon Two: Water and Thumbnail	117
Sharon Three: Face	118
Sharon Four: The Sun	121
Sharon Five: Triptic	122
Sharon Six: Aries	123

Sharon Seven: Male Gender	126
Sharon Eight: Doodle	127
Sharon Nine: Composition Detail	128
Sharon Ten: Compositional Detail	129
Sharon Eleven: Water Diagram	132
Sharon: Twelve: Weeping Woman	134
Sharon Thirteen: Spheres One	136
Sharon Fourteen: Spheres Two	137
Sharon Fifteen: Spheres three	140
Sharon Sixteen: Earth Heals	141
Sharon Seventeen: Final Triptych	144
Marie: One: Mexican Papier-Maché (Three Wise Men)	154
Marie Two: Three Sketches	156
Marie Three: Unclear Image	159
Marie Four: Thumbnails	160
Marie Five: Preliminary Tryptich	162
Marie Six: Compositional Sketches	163
Marie Seven: Mrs. V	164
Marie Eight: Flower Sketch	166
Marie Nine: Flower Image	167
Marie Ten: Thumbnails Two	170
Marie Eleven: Final Triptych	171
Joey R One America the Violent	183
Joey Two: Rain	184
Joey R Three: Vision Thing	186
Joey R. Four: Logo for The Pirates	187
Joey R: Life Begins at the Cross	189
Joey R Six: A Clear Day	191

Joey R Seven: The Observance	193
Joey R Eight: Jeremy	195
Joey R Nine: The Raw Melody Men	196
Joey R Ten: The Jump	197
Alice One: So Real	209
Alice Two: Women	210
Alice Three: Circles and Squares	212
Alice Four: Logo for Recycle etc.	214
Alice Five: Personal Logo	216
Alice Six: Heart	218
Alice Seven: The Path	220
Alice Eight: The Eye	222
Alice Nine: Dreams	224
Alice Ten: The Letter	226
Alice Eleven: Gates of Heaven	227
Alice Twelve: Summary Drawing	229
Alida One: The Cross	245
Alida Two: Inniskillen	246
Alida Three: Compositional Sketch (idea one)	248
Alida Four: Window Idea	250
Alida Five: Window Idea cont'd.	251
Alida Six: Family Tree (window idea)	252
Alida Seven: Shattered Window (window idea)	253
Alida Eight: Window on the Troubles (window idea)	254
Alida Nine: Final Personal Cultural Project (window idea)	256
Alida Ten: Source for Self Portrait	258
Alida Eleven: Possibilities	259
Alida Twelve: Thumbnails	260

Alida Thirteen: Thumbnails Two	261
Alida Fourteen: Source for Self Portrait Project	263
Alida Fifteen: Source for Self Project (hands)	264
Alida Sixteen: Artistic Hand	265
Alida Seventeen: Artistic Hand	266
Alida Eighteen: Hands Thumbnails Three	267
Alida Nineteen: Thumbnails Hands Four	268
Alida Twenty: Thumbnails Hands Five	269
Alida Twenty One: Hand Print One	270
Alida Twenty Two: Hand Print Idea Two	271
Alida Twenty Three: Hand Print Three	273
Alida Twenty Four: Hand Print Four	274
Alida Twenty Five: Final Self Portrait Piece	275
Opal One: Viking Ship	287
Opal Two: Map of LondonDerry	288
Opal Three: Enish Owen (LondonDerry)	289
Opal Four: Composition Sketch	291
Opal Five: Final Personal Cultural History	293
Opal Six: Copy from Kathe Kollewitz	295
Opal Seven: Copy from Albertini	296
Opal Eight: Copy from Van Gogh	297
Opal Nine: Copy from Rembrandt	299
Opal Ten: Copy from Vecallio	300
Opal Eleven: Copies from Durer, Van Dyck	301
Opal Twelve: Copies from Holbein, Rembrandt	302
Opal Thirteen: Compositional Sketch for Self Portrait	304
Opal Fourteen: Final Self Portrait	306
Sal One: Details for Personal Cultural History Project	318
Sal Two: Composition and Details	320

Sal Three: Sketches	321
Sal Four: Final Personal Cultural History Project	324
Sal Five: Sketches for Self Portrait Project	326
Sal Six: Compositional Sketches for Self Portrait	327
Sal Seven: Final Self Portrait Project	329

Reading this Thesis

This is a somewhat lengthy document and, as not every reader will come to it with the same needs or intentions, I provide brief chapter summaries that may help all to read efficiently.

Chapter One: The Inarticulate Artist: A Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project

Chapter One outlines some of my personal concerns that led to this Doctoral research on Creative Reflective Activity in the Visual Art Studio Classroom. I present a brief summary here, also, of the literature context that supported my inquiry. There is just about enough in this chapter to allow the reader who may be pressed for time, or less interested in the details of the inquiry context, to move into the Narrative Case Studies in Chapters Four, Five and Six where my interactions with the participants are presented.

Chapter Two: Pictures, Words and Numbers: The Literature Review

Chapter Two discusses the Literature context in detail. I have indicated seven areas from which I took my lead. They include writings on: a) artists' sketchbooks and journals: b) dialogue journals: c) creative reflective thinking: d) creativity and dialogue: e) the process of narrative inquiry: f) the roles of words and images in creative reflective activity; g) the role of an "exemplary" pedagogic practice.

This chapter is necessary, assuming time is there, for a scholarly appreciation of the framework of this study in terms of art and art education literature and the questions it has raised about the practices of students and teachers in the process of studying how to make art.

Chapter Three: Doing It: The Methodology of the DJSB

Chapter Three presents my methodology, and it's most important to the examining

committee and to other scholars who wish to assess my approach to my question. It includes examples of how I collected information and how I treated it to arrive at the Narrative Constructions of each DJSB exchange. While this chapter is especially important to such audiences, it also lays the background for Chapter Eight, wherein I assess the relative successes and failures of the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook (DJSB) in helping students to develop creative reflective art making. Chapter Eight follows on Chapters Four, Five and Six, but a reading of Chapter Three, especially the latter pages, would help one understand Chapter Eight .

Chapters Four to Six present those narratives and the follow-up interviews that I conducted to establish the verisimilitude of the narratives.

Chapter Four: “I Went Back to Montreal”: Narratives and Interviews at the Concordia site

Chapter Four focuses on the Pilot Project site at Concordia where I worked with graduating pre-service teachers in Art Education. Chapter Four contains three Narrative Case Studies and their related follow-up interviews. At the end of the chapter is a set of themes, which seemed to emerge as important factors in the DJSB exchanges. These themes from the pilot site became paradigmatic for the other two sites and provided me with an opportunity to note variations. This is a must-read chapter and could lead one directly to the summary, Chapter Seven. However those summations would seem thinner without a reading of the other two Narrative/Interview Chapters that show how site variations both reveal continuities and discontinuities with the pilot site.

Chapter Five: The Life Path: Narratives and Interviews at the Sheridan Site

Chapter Five deals with the Sheridan College site. It follows a structure similar to Chapter Four but here I deal with only two participants. While the pilot participants were students in their graduating year, these Sheridan participants were neophytes in their first year of College. This site, which did not have a culminating art project but only weekly

sketching and journaling, provides a contrast to the Concordia site and some variations on the important themes that became apparent at the pilot site.

Chapter Six: Narratives and Interviews at the UTM/Sheridan Site

Chapter Six deals with the UTM/Sheridan Site. This again was a site with first year participants but they had culminating projects. Here I deal with three participants in a similar Narrative Case Study-Interview framework. This site was notable for the resistance of one of the participants, Opal, and it is worth reading both her Case Study Narrative and her Interview for what it reveals about such resistance, both for the participant and for myself as participant researcher in the Thesis research project.

Chapter Seven: Emergent Themes in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Narratives and Interviews

Chapter Seven brings together the important thematic issues that were apparent at each site and comments on what they revealed about the project, the participants and myself. This is an important chapter for all readers. It could also be read, following Chapter One, by someone with little time, but with a desire to get a sense of what came up in the research study that seemed to be important to the participants and to myself as a participant researcher.

Chapter Eight: Assessing Participant Creativity and Reflective Thinking in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project

Did the DJSB exchanges increased the opportunities for creative art making by developing and extending the mutually creative and self-reflective capacities of students and teachers in the art education studio/classroom? In Chapter Eight I discuss how my perceptions of the relative successes and failures of the DJSB exchanges played themselves out and changed over the course of the project. I represent this in tables that

rank the participants and myself on creative reflective activity at the Narrative Case Study stage and again following the interviews.

Chapter Nine: Success and Failure in the DJSB Exchanges

Here in Chapter Nine I present my conclusions placing them where possible within the literature context from which I began. This chapter, of course, should be read by all and, to some extent, could be read on its own, or in conjunction with other selected reading strategies that I have suggested. My conclusions suggest that a critical view of the current “school” context for Art education is needed.

Chapter One: The Inarticulate Artist: A Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project

A: Introduction:

I applied to the Faculty of Art Education at Concordia University in Montreal with the desire to find some way to insert written discourse into art training so that artists would be more able to write (and talk) about their own work. In my application statement to Concordia I wrote: "My interest in this area has been fostered by my own art activities in the studio, the gallery and through writing. I have been aware of the difficulties many students and artists have in developing a creative-critical dialogue about their own artwork" (Collins, 1992).

Telling a story based on real incidents in my life as an artist can best sum up my awareness of this difficulty.

B. The inarticulate artist

The studio building at 9 Davey Street rises in a five-story square. The south side is hidden from Queen Street by the abattoir huddled against it. On the east a large graveled parking lot, studded with tufts of grass and pockmarked by neglect, stands in as a kind of park for the nearby Ontario Housing tenement. On the north side is a narrow alley onto which the freight elevator for the building opens. That side of the building never gets the sun. The alley is always cold, it seems, even in summer. A dusty wind blows along the alley. The Don Valley parkway borders the west side where Davey Street becomes an on-ramp leading the unaware into the North-bound traffic which is building normally on this afternoon, in Toronto during the spring of 1980.

I have been invited by an artist friend to visit his studio and see his new drawings and paintings. I go through the double glass doors off Davey (one pane is plywood - not glass), across the hard, dirty terrazzo floor and open the elevator door. I hope the elevator is working because I don't want to walk up the five flights of stairs to my friend's studio.

I am in luck. I hit the button and it creaks upward with a swaying motion and stops suddenly. I have to push the doors open and I step out onto the hardwood floor of a narrow hallway, its high walls of thinly painted white Gyproc leading away into a maze of halls and doorways. I come to the one I want. It's open, and with a "Hullo" I go in.

The studio is long and narrow. The hardwood floors have been sanded and varnished and the high walls along one side are painted white. Light and the heat of the lowering sun, pour into the room from windows along the West Side. My friend greets me, and gestures to his work, haphazardly laid out along the walls of the studio. He says: "Well, there it is. Wanta beer?" I look and say little. He says as much. While I look I drink my beer. Questions, I know, are considered impolite though I have many that I'd like to ask. The rule seems to be: "You can look at the art, but you can't expect the artist talk about it; that's for critics and curators - a scorned duo."

Afterwards we gossip desultorily about the "art scene" and then I leave, rather fed up with the process, although I did like the art.

C. The art education question: "How can student-artists develop creative reflective dialogues?"

When I think about how I came to do my doctoral pilot project on dialogue-journal sketchbooks this is the story I often tell myself. It seems to be characteristic of the way I have experienced artists' inability to communicate. This story is about a real event in my life, though with Crites' admonitions about cover stories in mind (Crites, 1979; pp. 107-129). I am perhaps more aware of my own synthesizing use of those events now than when I first told the tale. For example, I am not sure now about the beer; it might have been coffee or something else that was due to hospitality. Later I had a studio in the same building and my sense of what it looked like and felt like is built, no doubt, on that (especially my familiarity with the recalcitrant elevator). But the core of the tale and of my complaint about artists who can't talk about their art - that's real and a part of the reality I was operating from that day and, as well, at the beginning of my doctoral

research.

What I wanted to find out then, for reasons of my own, was how I could help student-artists develop creative dialogues that would link them to their colleagues, to their human context. Here I report on a research project into such dialogues and situations in which they may be carried out. My aim was to determine both how, and how well, they worked. My report on my research elucidates an attempt to make mutually reflective creative dialogues a more conscious practice in art education. This would, I contend, help artists and art teachers become more articulate about their creative work. My concerns here are linked to my interest in the way artists make art and how that might be brought forward into art teaching. I connect this to issues in the field of art education research, both insofar as it applies to finding out what the teachers are doing, and to clarifying the relationship of the teacher and the student in art classroom and studio.

Whatever my personal motives for considering this research, I have found that both art education researchers and education researchers have approached similar issues already. Often they have been concerned with the issues of creativity and of the role that reflective cognition plays in that activity. Some researchers have looked at this in children's art, seeing it in terms of various developmental or psychological theories. Lowenfeld (1947), Read (1945), Schaefer-Zimmerman (1948), Goodnow (1977) and Gardner (1990) have looked at the way in which children go about making art and have indicated how they think children should be considered or taught in the art classroom.

Other investigators (and these seem more relevant to my research) have looked at issues of creativity and student teacher interactions in college and university settings. Beittel considered the creative and self-reflective processes of college students in his *Mind and Context in Drawing* (1972). This kind of research interest was also the core of Marilyn Zurmuehlen's study (1990) of self-reflective, creative thinking in art making. Similar concerns informed Jesse Stout's study of reflective thinking in art making by students (1993).

The idea of mutual reflective dialogues as a source of creativity, has been studied by Perkins (1986), who developed the idea of out-loud conversations between those engaged in creative thinking and action. Schon (1985) has dealt with this idea of mutually self-reflective dialogue as a way to support creative thinking in the context of a studio class conversation between an architecture professor and a student. Beittel, as well, presented and discussed, mutually reflective conversations about art making (the drawing series) (1972). All of these researchers shifted the issue away from the individual's creativity towards one that has a social context (Smolucha and Smolucha, 1986, 1992; Johns-Steiner, 1985).

Getzels and Csikszentmihayi (1976) focused primarily on the issue of creativity in the education of artists. Like Beittel, they considered the steps or stages in the production of an artwork again through photography and follow-up interviews immediately after the drawings were completed. They looked at psychological explanations of why an artwork is made and highlighted the process of problem finding as the key step in creative activity.

They also conducted follow-up interviews seven years later to see how creativity as they had defined it contributed to the success of their student participants as professional artists. Some of these artists had difficulty talking about their work and often there were contradictions between what the artists said about their art and the actual practice of their art. Getzels and Csikszentmihayi (1976) referred to this as an ironic situation.

My study follows on these, in the sense that I look at work produced over a period of time, and I try to make apparent some of the thinking, feeling and making that went into the creation of the works of art. My study differs in that I located my interaction with the students in a written dialogue about their art making. As well I followed up with my participants in most cases about 18 months to two years after the original study. This time delay proved important.

The second issue, that of finding out what teachers have been doing in the studio

classroom in terms of teaching art making to their students has also been addressed in the past by art education and by other researchers.

Hausman (1972) and Eisner (1973) indicated that there was a need for further research into art teachers' practices in the classroom. This concern was part of a broader educational concern with this issue. Schwab (1962, 1970), reviewing science curriculum in the United States and also in project "Head Start", noted that it was hard to make recommendations without knowing what was going on already in the classroom. Some art educators like Efland (1976) and Lanier (1975) took that leap and developed theories that would help explain such teacher/student interactions but would also prescribe what they would be. Others, following Eisner's and Hausman's suggestions, engaged in specific research in the classroom or school situations. While Beittel's drawing series study (1972) and Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's longitudinal study of creativity (1976) were specific approaches to finding out something about the processes that the students underwent, others such as Barrett (1988), Kakas (1991) and Zimmerman (1992) looked at teachers in their interactions with the students to determine what the teachers were doing. Barrett relied upon reports from the instructors achieved via interviews to look at the approach of instructors to studio critiques. Both Kakas and Zimmerman used observational methods.

The study by Kakas, although it looked at oral communications and was concerned with the teacher and not the student, was important to my research. Kakas' use of a coded linguistic analysis of the teacher's interventions suggested how I might approach considering the texts that my participants and I created.

Zimmerman was concerned to observe two different teachers as they dealt with gifted students in a short studio course. She also interacted with the teachers outside of the classroom and she collected interview information from the students. Her conclusions were modest, but her work, along with those of Barrett and Kakas, represent efforts to find out what the teacher was actually doing in the art making class to influence the students, to support them and to have impact on their product. Zimmerman's attempts to

deal with both teacher and student were more in line with my interest in mutually self-reflective dialogues. I note that in my approach however, I was more like Beittel (1972) in that I was both participant and researcher.

Zurmuehlen (1990) was interested in self-reflective practice on the part of students but she derived her own reflections on studio teaching practice from the stories told by the teachers about the art making done by their students. Story telling is a powerful but somewhat contested means of conveying the complexities of the teaching process and of teacher student interactions. Carter (1993); Elbaz (1991); Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990, 1991, 1992) have all pointed out the usefulness of relying, at least in part, on the stories that teachers provide of their experiences in the classroom as a way of understanding the teacher's role in teaching. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) refer to the images or metaphors that govern a teacher's life and actions in the classroom.

I constructed the stories of my mutual reflections that I carried out with my participants, partly from a linguistic analysis of my texts (much like those Zimmerman carried out) in the tradition of discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1985) and analysis of the text image relationships (Berelson, 1952; Ball, 1991). I used the stories of my interactions with my students through the dialogue journal sketchbook to set the stage for follow-up interviews and to provide a base for interrogating the successes and failures of the initial exchange.

My aim is to report on what happened according to the documents that I derived from the written and visual exchanges and from the taped interviews that I carried out as a follow-up. My approach seems to fit into a trend in teacher research (Carter, 1993; Elbaz, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992; Nodding and Wetherell, 1994) but also to be one with which art educators like Zurmuehlen (1990), Beittel (1973) and Eisner (1992) have been sympathetic.

My basic research focused on art students who wrote journals about their art making. I considered three situations where the students linked their journal activities with their sketchbook exercises in a way that related significantly to their studio assignments in my

courses. My starting point was the fact that artists, including myself, have kept sketchbooks and, as well, have written in them about their process (Kirwin, 1987; Welton, 1991; Argan, 1961). Artists who have written extensive notes that supported their visual explorations in their sketchbooks included Da Vinci, Renoir, Klee and there are other more contemporary examples. And, of course, art historians, critics and those interested in creative art processes have often commented on or created texts that accompanied the sketchbooks of the artists (Arnheim, 1962; Ashton, 1986).

In my study, I looked at the concept of the artist's sketchbook and the artist's journal. I then noted specifically how I modified this concept to allow me to achieve an interaction with my student/participants around sketchbook activity. Since I am concerned with the issue of creativity I looked at some ideas of such that have played a role in art education and then I noted specifically how reflective and mutually reflective thinking is an important aspect of such views of artistic creativity. I considered the interactions through an analysis of the texts and the images and I also discussed the issue of the interaction of image and text or language in the exchanges. I spent some part of later chapter presenting and discussing the storied or narrative aspect of my inquiry and how I used that to move beyond the initial exchange.

One of my primary goals was to examine, in a naturalistic manner (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1994) how the dialogue journal sketchbook, as I will call it, played a role in the reflective creativity of the students in developing their projects or in coming to themes that they felt important in their art making. I wanted also to review the role that the mutual reflectivity engendered by the dialogue played as a part of the creative process. In that determination, following on some of the concerns of other art educators (Hausman, 1972; Eisner, 1973; Zurmuehlen, 1990), I hoped to elucidate my own practice as a teacher engaged in a dialogue with my students. In this way I would to bring into the forefront my own "personal knowledge practices" (Schwab, 1970; Connelly and Clandinin, 1992) and add to the developing bodies of text about what actually occurs in a classroom/teaching context.

Overall, I am interested in increasing the opportunities for creative art making, and to do so by developing and extending the mutually creative and self-reflective capacities of students and teachers in the art education studio/classroom, (Perkins, 1981, 1986; Schon, 1985, 1987, 1991; LaBoskey, 1994). I hoped to do this by providing an “exemplar” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Stake, 1994; Morse, 1994) of a mutually reflective pedagogic practice that would link together the languages of images and words and that would be supportive of creative practice in studio classes. An “exemplar” refers to a typical situation, but it does so in a weaker and less direct manner than a generalization. Exemplars are cases that “encapsulate complex meanings” but which are presented as “sufficient descriptive narrative(s) so that readers can vicariously experience these happenings and draw their own conclusions” (Stake, p. 243).

In the chapter following I deal with the literature context in greater detail to show both how my research is contextualized by previous studies and to provide some evidence that what I am suggesting is something of a departure in pedagogic practice in art education.

Chapter Two: Pictures , Words and Numbers: The Literature Review

A. Introduction

The problem that I am considering here is one that arises out of my desire to find some way to insert written discourse into studio art-training so that artists would be more able to write (and talk) about their own work in a way that was informed by knowledge of the context of their practice. My interest reflects similar interests by other artists, art writers and art educators. Beittel (1972,1973); Zurmuehlen, (1990); Stout (1993) and others have suggested that the reflective thinking engaged in by an artist/student is central to creative decision-making. Beittel devoted his 1972 study of drawing in series to the process of making clear and conscious, via a dialogue research methodology, the creative, reflective thinking of his participants. That the artistic mind is of wider interest is evident in the publication of artists' journals such as Klee's Notebooks (1969), the sketchbooks of Picasso (1986) or in the letters of a wide variety of artists. As well, many attempts that have been made to explore that reflective creative thought and action. Arnheim's study of Picasso's sketches for "Guernica" (1962), Fish and Scrivener's considerations of the "Sketches of Leonardo" (1990), Pariser's elucidation of the "Juvenile Drawings of Klee, Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso" (1987) point to the ongoing interest that those, who study and teach art, have in how and why art comes to be in the artist's mind. The recent development of discipline-based curricula reflecting the interests of many art educators (Arnheim, 1969; Eisner, 1986; Smith 1987, 1993; Efland 1988, 1990; DBAE Handbook, 1992) underwrites such interest further, for it aims to place creative art making in a reflective context of history, criticism and aesthetics.

In what follows, I will lay out more completely the research literature that provides the context for my own project. The areas which I believe are important to my study will be:

1. Artists' Sketchbooks and Journals
2. Dialogue Journals and Dialogue Sketchbook Journals
3. Reflective and Mutually Reflective Thinking

4. Narrative Inquiry and Re-storying
5. Creativity, Dialogue and Mutual Reflectivity
6. Words and Images in the Art making Process
7. Pedagogical Practice

I have chosen to consider each of these literature areas because they support my research aims and methods, either by establishing precedents or by providing both argument and documentation. That will be come apparent in what follows.

B. Artist's sketchbooks and journals

Liza Kirwin (1987) has written as follows:

Sketchbooks are a vast repository of ideas, perceptions, inspirational imagery and graphic experiments. As personal documents they afford an intimate view of an artist's visual thinking and reveal a private world and creative process often more direct and more ardent than in formal works of art. (p. 25)

It is that kind of awareness of the importance of sketchbooks that led me to consider them as a means of documenting a teaching interaction. Following Kirwin (1987) and Szekeley (1982), I believe that artists' sketchbooks can provide a model for student art-thinking and art making.

Fish and Scrivener (1990) point to the role that sketchbook activities may play in developing creative thinking processes in visual art. "Sketching is conducted both to clarify existing ideas and to develop new ones" (p. 117). They point out the need for artists to avoid premature decisions in their art thinking and the value that serendipity plays in provoking invention through the looser drawing procedures usually used in sketching. Their discussion sets out the processes of cognition involved particularly in terms of the relationship between observation and memory. Overall they place emphasis on the reflective role that sketching plays in the artist's (here they refer primarily to Da

Vinci) construction of a composition.

Other commentators have tried to explain the role of sketches in the creative process. Arnheim's study of the sketches underlying Picasso's "Guernica" (Arnheim, 1962) outlines the theories that would be developed more fully in his Visual Thinking (1969). He locates in Picasso's preparatory images a thought process, which he describes and explores, creating a text that runs parallel to Picasso's sketches.

Arnheim (1962) prefaces his discussions of Picasso's sketches with a detour through the idea of creativity funded by the psychologies of Freud and Jung. He points to the criticisms that have been raised against those authors; however, his main purpose is not to dismiss depth psychology but to arrive by way of those criticisms at the essential fact of "the importance of the unconscious processes in creativity" (p. 5). Arnheim's goal is not to promote permissive expression, as did the followers of Lowenfeld (1947) and Read (1945). He maintains that: "Rather does the creative person think deeply through what he observes so sensitively" (p. 8). Thus the artist, in order to think, uses visual images based on observation! There are various qualities of visual thinking: Everything seen must be taken literally; everything seen must be taken symbolically. This paradox is resolved by reference to Freud's concept of the dream work. Metaphor, personification, metonymy, synecdoche allow the dream "to condense a great deal of material together in a brief statement" (p. 11). Arnheim says that certain visual elements of the dream, or of the work of art, can also represent various grammatical relationships, e.g. connection, cause, condition etc., and he goes on to suggest that applications of the "grammar of the visual" described by Freud in reference to dreams "will be found in the preparatory sketches for Picasso's painting (Guernica)" (p. 12).

Arnheim's presents a convincing case for the movement of Picasso's thought through an analysis of Picasso's sketches. He combines formal with a symbolic analysis as he seeks the artistic motive for the decisions made by Picasso. Arnheim establishes a chart of attitudes and symbolic sentiments, which he applies to the cast of characters assembled by Picasso in Guernica. He sets out to trace the history of these characters, their

attributes, and their relationships as seen in the sketches. (He was assisted in this process by the fact that Picasso had dated the many sketches he did in preparation for the final work.)

If one grants Arnheim his original assumptions about the usefulness of the Freudian grammar, his analyses of “Guernica” come off fairly well. They are interesting and well argued. Like Arnheim (1962, 1967, 1969, and 1974), I follow theories of creativity that assume some inner, and likely unconscious, impulsion. What was also important to me here was seeing that there could exist a text parallel to the sketches of an artist that reflected on the process of those sketches as the artist moved towards a final composition.

Arnheim’s (1962) final contention regarding these sketches of Picasso is that

a germinal idea, precise in its general tenor, but unsettled in its aspects, acquired it’s final character by being tested against a variety of possible visual realizations. When, at the end, the artist was willing to rest his case on what his eyes and hands had arrived at, he was able to see what he meant. (p. 135)

Thus the artist, here Picasso, thinks his way through to a solution by exploring visual images, gradually refining them until he can recognize in them what he wants to say. In my research project I arranged for those students who participated in my research project to create their texts in dialogue with me hoping that this would reflect their own “visual thinking” as it appeared in their sketchbook images.

While Picasso did not annotate his sketches for “Guernica,” other artists’ have kept careful notes in their sketchbooks. Da Vinci and Klee, whom I will consider momentarily, are well known. However, the keeping of a sketchbook, or sketch diary, is widely practiced by artists. A lesser-known but more contemporary American artist, Oscar Bluemner, kept careful notes and diaries that explicated his sketches and the working out of the symbolism of his paintings (Gettings, 1979). His notes showed that his reflections on his work influenced his compositions and the meanings of the elements

within them.

Klee's Notebooks (Klee, 1961) were a journal and a sketchbook as well as records of his class notes and lectures. In essence Klee produced a record of the self-reflective practice of an educator as well as of an artist. As such "Klee's teaching activity-which was always closely bound up with his creative work- helped him become aware of his own way of working" (Introduction, p. 21). Thus, in the social context of the school, Klee was able to evaluate his own art making processes. This writing and art making were linked together in these Notebooks in an "exemplary" manner for my project.

Klee had studied the writings of other artists, among them Leonardo, Runge, Delacroix, Feuerbach, Seurat and Van Gogh. For him a self-reflective, self-investigative practice in language was natural for an artist. Art was not only to reveal the world of space and time but "one's own absolute authenticity" (Preface, p.14). This is a theme in the research writings of the art educator Beittel as well (1972) who saw his participants as "origins" and their drawings leading to a self-definition.

There is, of course, not much new in the idea of using sketchbooks in a studio class especially in colleges or universities where teachers often aspire to have their students imitate artists, and drawing instruction textbooks recommend the practice (Nicolaidis, 1969). Sketchbooks have been proposed for teaching the gifted in elementary schools (Szkeley, 1982) and have recently been used in grade one (Fahey, 1996). Even so, in my proposal, to introduce self-reflective writing into the sketchbooks of art students, Klee through his Notebooks stands as both an historical model of a self-reflective artist and of an art educator. His self-reflective practice, directed at his own artistic journey and at that of his students, marks the social continuum wherein creative acts grow (John-Steiner 1985; Smolucha L. and Smolucha, F. 1986) and showed the inevitable links between image making and the word.

Visual artists have also kept journals where they did not also sketch. Turn is the second journal that Anne Truitt, the American minimalist artist, has written (Truitt, 1986). Like

her Daybook which was published in 1982 and which was a description of the problem solving that integrated her life and her art making, it is a text without visual images or illustrations. Turn is a reflection on art and life in which art re-affirms Truitt's desire to create both her art and her emerging self. Marilyn Zurmuehlen (1991), in a review of both Daybook and Turn points out that,

Journal Writing is a way that people throughout history have enacted their heuristic inclinations-an evolving discovery of their own unique and particular selves. Whether chronicling mundane events, responding to circumstances of everyday living, or reflecting on the meaning of dilemmas and questions, the act of writing affirms an individual voice. (p. 124)

Truitt's journal (1986) clarifies the emergence of a self, a voice that parallels the art process of the writer. And in its self-reflective turn it gives the reader a look into the art making, problem solving process of the artist.

A chastening day yesterday. Color rose up and towered over me and advanced towards me. A tsunami-only that terrifying Japanese word for tidal wave will do-of color and I was swept off my feet. In frenzy I tried to catch it. Sheet after sheet of Arches paper spread around the studio, covering all the surfaces of all my tables and finally the floor. I tried to keep one step ahead all morning. In the afternoon I managed to get a toehold, and once again recognized my limitation; that vestige of all that a human being could know, that is what I do know. (p. 56)

As well as describing this highly personal grappling with the forces that work through her as an artist, Truitt, in her journal writes much about her life, her interaction with her family, other artists and, during a trip to Europe, other art. She exemplifies the Vygotskian concept of creativity that Johns-Steiner builds upon (1985). She tells stories about her art revealing the social, cultural, historical contexts in which it has been made.

These discussions of artists' journals and sketchbooks point to the value of such journal

writing as a description of the process by which life experiences are melded into art; they provide me, as do Klee's Notebooks, with a model that, I believe, is of use to the student and aspiring artist.

However in my study I have added a level of mutual reflectivity to the journal/sketchbook process. In my project, such artist/student sketchbook reflections on their work were the subject of regular written responses on my part as the instructor. My exchanges might be seen as somewhat like a correspondence between artists. However in this study they took place in an art school in a studio instruction context. I borrowed from the creative processes of artists a technique that I hoped would open up the creative processes of my students. I called both the process of these mutually reflective exchanges, and their repository, a dialogue journal sketchbook (DJSB).

C. Dialogue Journals and the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook

Over the past decade dialogue journals have been used widely in various contexts, in teacher education (Bean and Zulich, 1991; Catalano, and Tillie, 1991), in secondary schools (Turewicz, 1988), in adult education (McAlpine, 1991), in graduate schools (Cadzden, 1988), in teaching the deaf (Greaves, 1991) and in language and mathematics training (Staton and Peyton, 1989, 1993). Usually these dialogue journals have involved written exchanges between the instructor and students on the subject at hand.

Dialogue Journals as a tool in teacher student interactions are described first in Dialogue Journal Communication: Classroom, Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Views. (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988). Here the researchers presented a study of dialogue journals in a class of sixth grade students, and consequently much of the information is of direct interest to elementary teachers. Because this study looked at the written language transactions that went on between the teacher and her students, it drew my attention to some form of text analysis or discourse analysis as a means of considering the texts that my participants and I produced. Staton et al. (1988) points out:

In this research the attributes of the dialogue journal text itself determined the kind of analyses that would work. These attributes led toward the use of discourse analysis methods, and away from more traditional composition research methods . . . which would not tell about the way in which the student and teacher interacted to construct the communicative event. (p. 22)

In the context of the study the researchers found that the dialogue journals functioned in a ways reminiscent of the reflective practice discussed by researchers such as Schon (1985), Von Wright (1992) and LaBoskey (1994). They helped get things done, they helped build a personal relationship between the student and teacher, and they helped students build knowledge and acquire reasoning strategies (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988). This study demonstrated a practical use of dialogue journals, albeit in a different context than mine: to allow the students and teacher to engage in a mutually reflective creative practices (Schon, 1985; Perkins, 1986). It set out one of the definitions that are needed for understanding of my project: “Dialogue journal writing is the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written conversation between two persons . . . on a regular, continuous basis” (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988; p. 4). As well, the goal of the authors, “one of trying to understand the dialogue journals within the framework of the classroom community as a social system and within the framework of the individual relationships between each student and the teacher” (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988; p. 11) struck me as a useful framework for my own study.

This text was foundational for my aim to link together language use and image making in a practice that would assist learning in the studio. Although Staton and her colleagues did not address the issue of imagery, and while they operated outside the area of “art education,” they articulated a model of written reciprocal communication that lent itself to one of my goals in my project: opening up the kind of interaction that went on between a teacher and a student in an art studio/class. In their work (1988, 1993) and that of others (Turewicz, 1988; Greaves, 1991), a set of semantic categories emerged to establish the kinds and numbers of interactions that took place between teachers and students using the dialogue journal approach. I took up this approach in developing my coding categories

for assessing the character of the interactions in my study.

When dialogue journals had been used with older students, or adults, I found that other goals were specified, McAlpine, in Adult Learning, (January 1992) wrote:

We have conceptualized the relationship between the instructor and the trainee as one of mentoring. The mentor's interactions can be characterized in three ways: vision, challenge and support. Vision represents the mentor's ability to see where the learner is going, and, as much as possible, make this vision explicit to the learner; it is exemplified in such things as modeling, or suggesting new ways of thinking . . . In this context writing is an instructional device, one in which the instructors, relatively expert practitioners, give direction and feedback to trainees. It is a professional conversation carried on in written form that provides opportunities for trainees to raise questions and concerns regarding their experiences (p. 24).

Certainly in my research with young adults these more specified aspects of the interchange could be seen.

Turewicz (1988) stressed the more open nature of such conversations.

This study examines a mode of writing which may be more relevant because it is tied to the acquisition of skills and which acknowledges the needs and capabilities of individuals, yet at the same time, offers them the opportunity to write expressively in a natural, conversational situation. In dialogue journals, the teacher is not examiner, but co-writer who offers a supportive framework for the student's own writing . . . The key to understanding dialogue journals and their significance, is not to isolate factors such as writing, learning, thinking, or to separate process from product. The highly interactive nature of the journals means that they must be viewed holistically. When analyzing the data, the researcher discovered how difficult it was to separate and define chunks of data from what

was basically a continuous flow of conversation. (p. 137)

Turewicz's approach oriented me to considering case study, or narrative construction, as a way of relating the coding that I undertook at the sentence level to the larger patterns of the exchange. I will discuss how I developed that in a following chapter.

Other researchers have used dialogue journals in teacher training (Bean and Zulich, 1991; Tillie, 1991) have analyzed their texts through coding procedures and they have noted categories of interaction analogous to those noted by Staton and Peyton (1988, 1993), Turewicz (1988), Greaves (1991), Staton, Shuy, Peyton, and Reed (1988).

Such kinds of categories, derived from the analysis of the discourse inform my methodology as well. I have used emergent code categories assigned to sentences in the exchange to characterize the exchange in terms of the participants, myself and the sites, as I considered both text and image. These characterizations underpin further analyses I carry out in terms of mutual reflective creative thinking; they are the substrata of the stories of the DJSB exchange that emerge from this study. I will deal with both of these issues in following sections of this literature review.

Overall I found these texts on dialogue journals exciting and fruitful as I began to conceptualize my own approach to the dialogue journal sketchbook. I felt that this was a unique approach in art education. Although Jesse Candace Stout (1993) had, at least, in part, brought forward the idea of a dialogue journal in the art education context, she conceived the dialogue as existing only between the artist and her work. Stout points out that for such journals to be successful they must "set up a conversation, an exchange between the writer and his or her learning experiences in making and responding to art"(p. 40). She goes on to describe how the "dialogue" journal should be set up in a double entry format, one column for the artist/student's unmediated notes, the other for their reflections on such perceptions. This is the kind of self-reflective action that Zurmuehlen (1990), Beittel (1972) and others (Dewey 1934) have recommended following on artists' practices. Such art education dialogue journals have not, as far as the

current literature shows, been used as a means of a mutual, written exchange between the teacher and the student, but rather as a way for the students to build a dialogue between themselves and their work. My project, on the other hand, has emphasized the mutual dialogue between the teacher, in this case myself, and my student-participants. In this way I hope to delineate my contribution as the teacher to the creative thinking and making by my participants.

In my study, since the students engaged in a written interchange with me in their sketchbooks and about their drawing and art making process, I am adopting a dual definition for the dialogue journal sketchbook. “‘Dialogue journal’ writing is the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written conversation between two persons, in this case a student and a teacher, on a regular, continuous basis” (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988; p. 4). Artists’ sketchbooks are “books” bound or otherwise, where artists/students sketch and sketching [is] the production of untidy images to assist in the development of visual ideas, . . .one of the oldest and most familiar activities of artists and designers (Fish, and Scrivener, 1990; p. 117) . Thus a dialogue-journal-sketchbook combines these functions, and the conversation within is related to the sketches done by the student/artists. As such, its use, as far as I have noted in the art education literature, is unique, yet situated in an existing field of educational practice.

D. Reflective and Mutually Reflective Thinking

I am taking the stance that successful dialogue, in the social sense, must be based on a mutual reflection by the participants, including the researcher, upon the “facts” of the situation, whatever they are. We can carry out self-reflective activities, but since we are only able to do so from frames of reference that are cultural and essentially social, we need the input of others to extend our interpretations, realizations etc. Such a dialogue is a process of mutually refining perceptions over a period of time, not a one-time vote by the participants. As such, its value in education, and life, is significant.

However, most considerations of reflective thinking have tended to focus on what the

individual does. That such self-reflective practice is considered important generally and in education has been well documented (Von Wright, 1992; Achilles, 1989; LaBoskey, 1994; Schon, 1983, 1985; Dewey, 1934, 1938). Its role in art education, and creative thinking, has been noted by a wide range of practitioners (Dewey 1934; Zurmuehlen, 1990; Beittel, 1972; Schon, 1985, 1991; Stout, 1993).

As a meta-cognitive skill it has been seen as a way of “monitoring and consequent regulating and orchestrating of (cognitive) process in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective” (Forrest-Pressley and Waller, 1984; p. 1). The development of such skills has been in the service of practical applications often in situations that required response to novelty. (Schon, 1985, 1988, 1991; Lanzara, 1991; LaBoskey, 1994; Von Wright, 1992; Achilles, 1989).

Dewey in various texts (1934, 1938, 1958) emphasized the importance of reflective thought in life as well as in education. Dewey linked his discussion of reflection to his concept of experience and of aesthetic experience. Reflection upon events in life enabled one to find the shape in it and to give a wholeness that could, at the least, be called an experience. Thus reflection was essential to the process of finding or giving meaning to one’s life. While the impulse to action might proceed in a direct unreflective manner, the impulse or thought or reflection was due to the discords that arose out of action. “Discord is the occasion that induces reflection” (Dewey, 1934; p. 15). The reconstructive thought that arose in response to discord in the situation, whatever it was, led to cognitive and personal growth. Thus reflection upon action at various levels resulted in development or learning. Reflection had a special significance for the artist because it “could be incorporated into objects as their meaning” (1934, p. 15). Dewey saw reflective activity as a function of response in living situations. He wrote: “Thinking is the postponement of immediate action, while it affects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection” (Dewey, 1938, p. 64). An important issue for me in this statement is Dewey’s reference to memory because it suggests narrative reconstruction as a basis for understanding.

Various authors have tried to set out a model for self-reflection based on the observed or reported activities of the self-reflectors. Schon (1987) used an observation protocol derived from an architectural design class. He noted that:

Depending on the context and the practitioner, such reflection-in-action may take the form of on-the-spot problem-solving, theory building or re-appreciation of the situation. When the problem at hand proves resistant to readily accessible solutions the practitioner may rethink the approach he has been taking and invent new strategies of action. When a practitioner encounters a situation that falls outside his usual range of descriptive categories, he may surface and criticize his initial understanding and proceed to construct a new, situation-specific theory of the phenomenon. When he finds himself stuck, he may decide that he has been working on the wrong problem; he may then evolve a new way of setting the problem, a new frame that he tries to impose on the situation. (p. 27)

Donald Schon's studies (1985, 1987, 1991), along with research by his colleagues such as Lanzara (1991), seem to be a warrant for my "practical" conclusion about a mutually reflective dialogue

LaBoskey (1994) based her comments on an analysis of pre-service teachers' journals and on follow-up interviews. LaBoskey moves towards her own definition of reflective practice relying, as Schon does also, heavily upon Dewey. In her analysis of pre-service teachers reflective journals she borrows Dewey's model that specifies: 1) the definition of a problem; 2) a mean-end analysis; 3) a generalization allowing further action. However at the conclusion of her study she notes, as I have also done, that reflective practice is difficult to describe in simple terms because it is not so specifically rational as Dewey and others who follow him, such as Schon, seem to imply at times. Her final position is closer to one which I have come to recognize as dynamic and hermeneutic (Zurmuehlen, 1990; Gadamer, 1994) in which there is a constant intuitive re-framing of the thinker's position in relationship to an ever - changing situation.

While Schon sees intuition as significant in reflective thinking, he seems to suggest, though his very schematization of the process, that it is a more rational process involving conscious choices between alternatives. LaBoskey notes that the process of reflective thinking is over-determined by the individual teacher's personal narrative (see also Connelly and Clandinin 1988, 1994). As I see it, this is the area of the repertoire, as Schon calls it, or the area of memory, as Dewey says. My study provides some evidence, as you will see, that personal narratives over-determine reflective thought and creativity. Because of this over-determination, LaBoskey argues for more individualization of educational practice. I clearly agree with her here. My whole project revolves around a written relationship with individual students. I would maintain along with Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990) that the personal narratives of the student, and, of the teacher, are the determining issues in what happens in the educational process. The life story of the student (and I think this is more immediately evident in teaching art practice perhaps, than in teaching teachers) is what determines the extent to which the student and teacher can be truly reflective and creative in their thinking and in their art making. However, that story evolves in a context, a social and educational situation where dialogue is important.

Connected to this (and LaBoskey makes a plea for considering this issue in the closing paragraphs of her text) is the emotional life of the students and teachers. The emotional life of the participants in my study was clearly important to their success in reflective thinking and in creative activity. This however, along with the life issues that determined their responses to the classroom situation was not always apparent in the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange. Some of it only became apparent in the follow-up interviews, which I carried out a year or more after each site study had been completed.

These three issues, identified by LaBoskey: a) the indeterminate nature of the process of reflective and creative thinking, (which I refer to as the hermeneutic approach); b) the importance of the participants' personal narratives, and c) the role of emotion in the processes of creative thinking, are what I have seen emerging in my study. Although I

have used Dewey and particularly Schon's models, as does LaBoskey, to analyze the reflective thinking processes in my participants, I have been also concerned with seeking evidence of mutual reflectivity and I have looked most closely at the stories, or repertoire (Schon, 1985) of myself and my participants in that mutual reflective interchange. This emphasis has tended to suggest that the narrative histories of myself and the participants may provide a better understanding of mutually reflective creativity (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1990; Wetherell and Noddings, 1991; Carter 1992; LaBoskey, 1994). These histories, referred to intuitively by my participants and myself, provide a repository of exemplars that allow for analogous thinking (Rose, 1980; Schon, 1985, 1987; Kuhn, 1996; Stake, 1994). In turn, this provides for a move towards fitting old awareness into new situations in an intuitive way.

In my study I conclude that the repertoire arising from the narrative history of the participants provides the basis for reflective thinking and for mutual reflection-in-action, which seems to be a feature of the art making process. While Schon, for example, is concerned to link mutual reflection in action to the larger issues of technical rationality I have been led to focus on the "repertoire" or the narrative histories of the participants as a ground for their art making activities. I have seen the repertoire playing a crucial role in the acts of problem finding, and the parlaying of experience into art solutions and aesthetically acceptable solutions. Here I see aesthetics in Deweyan terms, as an epitome of experience, which by its very nature results in a converging of disconnected incident into a comprehensible whole (Dewey, 1934, 1958). Thus, though I start with coding procedure and with models of reflective thinking, I move to repertoire and its narrative extension, as the key element in the mutually reflective process in which my participants and I engaged.

Two features of the mutual self-reflective process that emerge in my report have an impact on the teaching situation. One of them has to do with the way in which I and my participants reached understandings about what was going on in our exchanges. The second has to do with the way in which that process influenced the creativity of the participants.

E. Creativity, Dialogue and Mutual Reflective Thinking

Part of my goal in my study was to help the participants become more creative in their art making by introducing a mutually reflective dialogue around their art process. To clarify what I mean, I have looked to other art educators who have focused on the issue of creativity. I will maintain that, among other things, successful art education depends upon the teacher's ability to foster, develop and release the creativity of the student/artist (Perkins, 1986,1994; Gardner and Perkins, 1989; Beittel, 1972; Zurmuehlen, 1990) through transformative dialogue. As creativity is concerned with re-defining our interpretations of reality, e.g., through finding problems in art making (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Perkins 1981, 1986) and reflectively re-orienting ourselves (Dewey, 1934; p. 15), a mutual-self-reflective dialogue would support a creative teaching situation.

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's The Creative Vision: A Longitudinal Study of Problem Finding in Art (1976) is a study of creativity in artists, which indicates that the key element in creativity is the artist's ability to find a problem that she or he feels needs solving. This seems to fit well into the process of the mutually reflective dialogue that Schon (1985) develops, as well as into other various reflective models (LaBoskey, 1994) that focus on generating creative responses in a variety of situations.

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi contend that the various models that have emerged to explain human creativity reduce to two basically antithetical positions. One model defines creativity as based on stimulus reduction and the other on stimulus seeking. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi argue that these two positions can be usefully merged in order to help explain the data that they gathered in their study. The finding and framing of the artistic question, in the view of Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, lies in a synthetic behavior that both seeks to reduce tension and seeks to increase it (p. 241). It is this dual process that leads the artist to both try to resolve problems connected to personal or societal situations that cause some discomfort in the artist, as well as to seek solutions in

some future temporality. Thus creativity escapes being a closed loop. As Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi point out: “The aim of the creative activity is not to restore a previous equilibrium but to achieve an emergent one”(p. 243).

Thus these two researchers place the creative act directly in the realm of self-reflective activity (cf. Schon, 1985). It is the artist with the greatest capacity to identify problems and to seek solutions for them who usually has the most creative success. However it is not simply the finding of a solution that is significant. Like Schon and Dewey, they maintain that it is the ability to keep the options open, even while looking for both problem and solution. “Artists who defined their problem soon after starting to work produced drawings that were less original than those who kept the problem open longer” (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; p. 247).

As well, Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi point to the uniqueness of each creative situation: “It seems that a creative problem cannot be fully visualized in the ‘mind’s eye’; it must be discovered in the interaction with the elements that constitute it” (p. 247).

I find this later concept useful because I am interested in both the interaction of the artist with the work and the interaction of the artist with peers and mentors (teachers). It suggests that conceptualization of problems and the discovery of solutions emerge out of such mutually self-reflective interaction. Accordingly this study lends credence to a teaching procedure that emphasizes mutual self-reflective activity. It also points to the necessity to maintain openness in the creative process (Eco, 1989), through a flexible and responsive dialogue.

Like Arnheim (1962), Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi make use of the concept of the unconscious, referring to both Freud and Jung, along with other psychoanalytic literature. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi note that their conclusions are supported theoretically and empirically, both through the experimental work they carried out and their long term follow up on the artists. However they do not suggest that all the “problems” have been solved. For one thing, there are questions about the forces that disturb what Getzels and

Csikszentmihalyi identify as the homoeostatic process (p. 246), and which lead the artist on his or her search to identify a problem and a solution. That remains something of an unconscious mystery. As well, the study is not final in the sense that it provides only a limited sample, though it does show, from their point of view, “that problem finding and its critical role in thinking and creativity can be studied empirically”(p. 251).

In The Mind's Best Work (1981), Perkins takes on the issue of creativity from a somewhat similar approach. He sets out to “make the strange familiar . . .to show how creating in the arts and sciences is a natural comprehensible extension and orchestration of ordinary everyday abilities of perception, understanding, memory and so on” (p. 4). His pursuit of this is through a very specific program of argument. He sets up, or presents, propositions, in the chapter sections, that each purport to represent “a familiar or a plausible view about creating” (p. 7) and then proceeds to investigate those propositions. As the end of each section of argument he presents a modified proposition that has arisen out of his argument, and so he gradually works his way towards a statement of what creativity is in his final chapter. As it turns out, this statement confirms his original contention that: “Any normal person can be creative in terms of whatever abilities he or she has or can acquire”(p. 287).

Perkins follows on Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels identifying problem recognition as a key element in creativity. As well, Perkins describes his own “think-aloud” work with poets and artists that seems to support the idea of the dialogue journal (pp.105-107). In his later work Perkins is more interested in dispositions or attitudes and suggests some that would counteract our human tendencies to be narrow, fuzzy, hasty and sprawling (1994). In his writings directed towards thinking in education in general (1986, 1992, 1994), Perkins aims to increase reflective thinking and introduces a series of strategies to overcome these human weaknesses.

One of these strategies, his thinking by design, is model like and presents another referent for my study of mutual reflectivity. In Knowledge By Design (1986), he lays out a process model derived from design sciences clarifying how problems can be recognized

and solved by placing them in a design context somewhat like Schon (1985). Perkins is concerned with making creativity more precise, more rational. I find this attractive but I also note that the impulsion to creativity may come from obscure areas in an artist's life. Where Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi depart somewhat from their model building and look to the stories they tell about their participants, they note that "the interaction with the elements that constitute the self-reflective process" (p. 247) are preserved in all their idiosyncratic roughness and richness. One of the things that I will be trying to get at in my report is that idiosyncratic roughness. I will be attempting through my presentations of and discussion of the dialogue journal exchanges to show the processes of artistic thinking and behavior. One way of contextualizing that is to look at reports of artists on their own creative process. This takes me back to the artists and their sketchbooks that I discussed earlier. As well, I refer to the self-reports on artists' creativity published intermittently in Leonardo magazine.

One such artist who reports on her creative process is Crystal Woodward. She addresses all those, including art educators, who are interested in the processes involved in making art (Woodward, 1987). Woodward's focus is on the experiential, mental and practical processes she engages in as she comes to her rather unique images.

Woodward, like Klee, as well as being an artist is a teacher. Her description of her own process is also a description of a process she teaches to her students, something which seems typical of art educators. In her text she hopes to provide a direct model for the practicing art educator as well as casting light on the inner processes of art making. As Woodward describes them, these processes are phenomenological, experiential, and intuitive.

She is interested in an analysis of visual images using linguistic categories, and she seemed to me representative of a trend apparent in Arnheim's text on Picasso's sketches. Woodward's project is actually to create a visual language complete with rules (p. 228) and a vocabulary (p. 227). She appears to be trying to develop a generative grammar of visual expression. She is descriptive more than reflective. She seems to outline a

procedure that would combine chance and structure almost in a kind of *sortilège*.

Woodward, though she seems to present a confused view at times, is of interest because she points to the individual efforts that artists make to insert meaning into their work through procedures that allow for both predictability and serendipity. Although Woodward's procedures are not exactly located in the "sketchbook" they are similar to the process outlined by Fish and Scrivener (1990). Woodward tries to go beyond a cognitive description of what she does. Essentially it seems she is trying to find a way to anchor her fleeting internal images through a concrete procedure, which she finds a model for in propositional language. At the same time she tries to maintain the indeterminacy that Fish and Scrivener pointed to as a source of creative image making (p. 120). This process, which has in it some echoes of Schon's discussion of self-reflective creative thinking, she tries to teach to her students.

I found this interesting but somewhat artificial. The ongoing process of dialogue between me and my students seemed to provide a more natural way for art processes to evolve according to the situation rather than have them be established by a method of *sortilège*. Woodward's methodology does seem to be an attempt to enter into the kind of reveries or preconscious states discussed by those interested in creativity from the psychoanalytic side (Winnicott, 1953; Milner, 1957; Rose, 1980; Erhrenzweig, 1970; Storr, 1972, 1991; Rudnytsky, 1993). However it seems that she wants to do so through the more distanced mechanism of "casting lots" thus reducing any intra-psychic cost.

Erhrenzweig (1970), who finds creative thought rooted in unfocused scanning which bring unconscious and preconscious perceptions, thoughts and feelings into play in the art making and art-judging process, notes that this can produce a great deal of anxiety in the artist. The capacity to bear that anxiety allows for the reverie to be prolonged. Thus closure is suspended. It also allows the artist to accept what comes forth from that reverie without extensive revision. Czikmentmihalyi and Getzels emphasized delayed closure in the artistic process. Perkins (1981) subscribes to that as well but has a more systematized way of dealing with the process overall. In my research I have tried to remain alert to

both processes of reverie and its attendant anxiety, as well as looking for signs of process model like those of Schon or Perkins.

Some psycho-analytically based writers on the issue of creativity overcome the tendency of that group to focus on internal processes of creativity and see it as taking place in a social context. Those, like Milner and Winnicott, especially stress that the art making process is a process of social relationship both internalized imaginatively from childhood experiences and, as well, enacted in a social context where the artist seeks to have his or her re-making of reality accepted by an audience. As well, Winnicott developed the idea of the “good enough” mother as a metaphor for the kind of caring response that a mother makes somewhat automatically to meet her child’s emerging needs (Rudnytsky, 1993). These aspects of their formulation seem to apply to my dialogue relationship with my participants. Though that interchange focused on the process of the making of art and not necessarily on childhood reference points, in some cases the latter emerged to influence the art making.

Another aspect of the psychoanalytic writers on creativity, such as the early Arnheim, that strikes a chord in terms of my project is the idea of symbol-formation in a state of reverie. The artist in a functional but preconscious state finds a way to link ideas, concepts, and images together, to make unfamiliar perceptions familiar by fusing them with familiar ones and thus making something new. This seems to be echoed in Schon’s discussion of how creative thinking works by analogy from one’s life experiences or repertoire. However Schon doesn’t clearly spell out a means by which that can happen. The writings of Milner, Rose, Erhrenzweig and Winnicott seem to fill in that gap with the idea of “reverie” that leads to fusion of old and new in pre-logical state.

Anne Truitt (1982) describes how her work emerges out such reveries:

“The force of my concentration can also be directed toward single visual events: a glimpse or radiant space, a plant in a lake, a juxtaposition of weights and shapes that matches, touches of some powerful resonance in me. Certain sensory

experiences draw forth into clarity what visually they only infer. The laws they exemplify seem to spring from behind them, organizing a whole of form and color that lies just beyond what my senses apprehend” (p. 94).

In my research, which relies upon dialogue for information, I try to go beyond an individualistic concept of creativity whether it be rationally oriented to problem finding or solving, or more intuitively oriented to a process of fusion occurring in reverie. Some researchers in education and cultural theory support such an aim.

Johns-Steiner (1992) founds her belief in an alternate social model of creativity in the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. As well, Johns looks to scholars who have explored the role of apprenticeship (Collins, Brown and Newman, 1989), or those who have studied thought collectives such as Ludwig Fleck (cited in Johns, 1992). These collectives are more like communities though the relevance of the term “collective” used by a Russian psychologist is clear. John-Steiner says: “An interesting example of a thought community is the one formed at the Institute of Psychology in 1924” (p.106). This is the “collective” the Vygotsky joined and came to lead. While John-Steiner points out that research into this kind of model is only beginning, she does provide some validation for the concept of reciprocal learning through a mutual self-reflective dialogue. This process, in essence a kind of apprenticeship, contextualizes the development of creative action in the interactions of art education.

Contrary to Piaget, L., Vygotsky viewed: “higher mental functions (creative imagination and thinking in concepts) as the internalization of previously external social communication” (Smolucha, Larry and Francine, 1986; p. 4). Vygotsky contended that Piaget’s concept of ego-centric speech was incorrect and that children, in fact, direct such talking-to-themselves, to adults within hearing range, though not necessarily right there. As children grow they internalize this talking along with the play that accompanied it. The social conversation becomes inner speech. Play becomes imagination. It is an imagination that is conscious, originating in collective social interactions. It can be used

for personal wish fulfillment or creative problem solving in art or science (pp. 4-6). In adolescence the imagination begin to converge with inner speech, and to operate in concepts (p. 6). It is this capacity to combine imagination and thinking in concepts that is the basis of all adult creativity (p. 7).

This stance which locates creative activity in its origins and its continuity within a social process is a useful one for my project, where I am striving to uncover the mutual creative processing that went on in the DJSB exchanges.

As well, Johns-Steiner in Notebooks of the Mind (1985) discusses “Images of Great Scope” that appear in the work of creative thinkers over their lifetimes. John-Steiner and Perkins makes the point that, while the creative person is not unlike the ordinary person in types of abilities, the creative person does have a commitment to being creative and to following problems, over a lifetime if necessary, to find the appropriate solutions (Johns-Steiner, pp. 220-244). In this consideration of the creative commitment, Perkins and John-Steiner carry the discussion of creative activity beyond problem finding and solving models. In so doing they both point to the difficulties of elucidating outstanding creative actions without reference to long time periods. This provided a caution to me, somehow, to find a way to keep my consideration of the issue of creativity boundaries and focused while at the same time that I recognized the “creative” role that commitment over time may play. Thus I could reference the personal narratives of the participants and myself both within, and outside, the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange.

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) are also aware of time as an issue in the development of creative practice. In the longitudinal study, which followed on their problem finding experiment with art students, they were concerned with external factors as well as internal ones that allow such students to succeed as artists in society. Although this was not their intent, they indicated the role that the personal narratives of the artists in question, played in their developing creativity. In my report it becomes apparent that the personal narratives of my participants (and myself) and of the stories that lie behind creative works of art or creative artistic solutions, may hold an answer to some of the

mystery of the impulsion that drives the artist to create.

Creativity as I see it in my project has a number of dimensions. It has its roots in the development of the individual (Storr, 1987) who of course finds herself in a social context. Most commentators (Vygotsky, 1957; Winnicott, 1958; Milner, 1957; Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976) agree on some such relationship but vary in their emphasis on which is most important. In my research I look at creativity as it emerges in a situation of ongoing dialogue over a periods of time, within a social narrative. While some researchers emphasize more rational approaches to creativity all seem to agree that there are unconscious or pre-logical impulsions that lead an artist to make work, to find a solution in the world that may, in the best circumstances satisfy him or herself and an audience. I am concerned with the rational as it might appear in the mutual self-reflective dialogue, as in the model developed by Schon, but I am also alert to the irrational, the pre-logical, the emotional, to chose three names of that “hidden” function, as it may appear in the exchanges. Since my study is an emergent one I have not been not looking for a specific creative process to become apparent but I am looking for any indications, following on my authorities for creative thought and action that could be seen emerging as a result of the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange, whether in word or image.

F. Reaching An Understanding through a Mutual Re-interpretation of events: the Process of Narrative Inquiry in a Dialogue

To understand a situation, simple or complex, we engage in interpretations and re-interpretations through our symbolic systems, image and text, of what we, as far as we can tell, think is that situation. Dewey emphasized (1934, 1938) that our way of coming to understandings in the process of our experiences required a reconstruction, a remaking that was at the heart of reflective thinking. Part of that process for me has involved a characterization of the DJSB exchanges based on an assignment of code categories to sentences and images used in the those exchanges. Part of it has involved an analysis, following models, of mutual self-reflective, creative incidents in the exchange. However, in order to link the parts, the incidents to the whole exchange I have made use of

narrative, both as an element in the exchanges that is identified by Schon as repertoire, and as the story of the exchanges themselves.

From a constructivist viewpoint such linking is an ongoing process analogous to the hermeneutic discipline of text interpretation (Schwandt, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1994; Gadamer, 1994). The interpretive activity produces “experiences” as Dewey called them—sequences of events that take on shape and meaning. That idea has been extended by recent researches into what are called emergent narratives or quasi-narratives (Eisner, 1992; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Ricoeur, 1988; White, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1985). The shape of these narratives, understood as plot, brings us understanding of the events, texts, etc in whose interpretation we have been engaged. From an art education perspective, such narratives are linked to aesthetic understanding (Dewey, 1934; Beittel, 1972; Eisner, 1992). As well, they may have transformative effects on the participants through their realization of the narrative structure of their experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994) or through re-storying activities that revise that understanding in the light of new stories (Lanzara, 1991). The reconstruction that goes on to bring one to an awareness of an experience, a shape, a narrative, is clearly both individual and social. That is it involves a mutual re-interpretation of the events to recast them into mutually acceptable experiences or narratives. This framework underlay my construction of the narratives of the exchange and the re-investigation of those narratives that I carried out through follow up interviews.

In “Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education” Wetherell and Noddings (1991) present practical evidence of the use of narrative as a shaping or meaning giving tool in educational research. Many of the essays here deal with narrative as a source of moral development and stress, as does Polkinghorne (1988), that narratives are social constructions. They emerge in contexts out of relationships between people in essence through dialogue. Noddings (p. 157 ff.) points out that the mutuality of such dialogues in a caring atmosphere generates what she calls “interpersonal reasoning,” a cognitive process that is open, flexible, creative and based on a desire to maintain the relationship as much as to arrive at a fixed goal. One proceeds by suggestion and by addressing possibility.

This stance I find particularly useful, in my consideration of mutually reflective and creative thinking, because it gives me a somewhat different point of purchase.

Wetherell and Noddings have some polemical goals in presenting this set of essays but their arguments, although not focused on the art classroom support my project. They suggest, indirectly that the dialogue journal sketchbook, to be successful must incorporate something of that caring that Noddings describes (Cf. Winnicott, 1971). As well, these essays reflect a valorization of what Schon and LaBoskey were concerned with in their texts, the way that the storied nature of human experience is brought to bear on our interactions in professional situations. In this way their collection of essays supports the overall thrust of my report.

Carter (1993) outlines some of the issues that arise in the real world of academia and educational research in the turn to story as a locus of such educational research. What is helpful here for me is to see her use of a “balanced” support of this methodology. She sees how “story” as a way of thinking adds not only depth to the research enterprise but brings into it areas of data that were previously elided, or altogether ignored, in more analytic approaches. At the same time she is cautious about the political implications of a focus on “voice” and she emphasizes the reconstructive, rhetorical qualities of all narratives. Even so she embraces “story” as of “central importance for our field” (p. 11). What is important in telling stories is twofold. One aspect of telling stories has to do with the effects this has on the participants and the narrator. Connelly and Clandinin (1994) argue for the transformative effect of constructing stories through narrative inquiry where collaborative re-interpretation is going on. The “important task in narrative is the re-telling of stories that allow for growth and change” (p.418). This transformative mode of communication that narrative provides is what Wetherell and Noddings (1991) see as important also.

Clandinin and Connelly (1991. pp. 258-281), also deal with the concept of shifting stories and the idea that some stories are better than others because they “help us to understand and act more effectively in a situation of action” (Schon, 1991. p. 313). This concept

seems to be the central theme of the study that Connelly and Clandinin carried out in a Toronto public school. Here they focused on “Phil” who was the principal of the school, and on how he constructed his decisions and relationships in a “storied” manner. I found useful the ambiguity implicit in Phil’s “stories” that Connelly and Clandinin remarked on towards the end of the article. (p. 276). They point out that going back to Phil with the effect of his narrative choices would have affected how he saw himself and perhaps how he handled himself in this school. This, like Lanzara’s similar observations in her consulting role, seemed to me to point to an effective use of narrative inquiry in a school setting. Re-storying the situation may lead to positive and significant changes.

Lanzara, in “Shifting Stories Learning From a Reflective Experiment in a Design Process” (New York, 1991), somewhat like Schon (1985), reports on an intervention in an experiment within a design process and gives an example of a re-storying process in the adoption of a curriculum.

The setting is a “major educational and research institution.” The project deals with the adoption of a computer based music instruction program as part of the undergraduate curriculum of the Music Faculty at the “Institute” as it is referred to in the text. Ms. Lanzara provided her feedback to the Music Logo design team through story telling. The stories were constructed from her notes and revised through conversations (backtalk) with the participants (p. 291). These shifting stories form the substance of Lanzara’s narrative in this paper. This is somewhat similar to my process. She tells us what happened in a sort of novelistic way. Stylistically she takes us into her notes and her reflections on them. She doesn’t really address the reader but allows the reader to observe her as she goes through the process. Thus, like the detectives in Philip K. Dick’s Do Androids dream of Electric Sheep (Doubleday, 1968), we see her constructing some “stories that are better than others, in the sense that they help us to understand and act more effectively in a situation of action” (p. 313).

But she reminds us (1991) that we remain constrained by the fact that:

The truth of an event can never be accessed through a sort of composition or combination of the innumerable stories that can be told about it. The truth of an event is itself a makeshift artifact that must be jointly constructed and tested in practice and has only a practical, local validity. (p. 313)

Lanzara's stories about the project reveal this joint construction, this makeshift validity and yet she also shows people acting on it. At the same time through her own self-reflective practice she is concerned with revealing hidden elements in the design process (1991).

The self-study was an occasion to extract a considerable amount of knowledge about the multiple and subtle threads binding design intentions and choices, educational options and patterns of adoption within a given institution. This knowledge is often difficult to access because it is embedded in the outcomes of the design process and tends to be obliterated by the outcomes. Rather it is 'anchored' to the shifting stories that people tell at different stages of the process-stories that people tend to forget as they proceed in designing. (p. 316)

Lanzara's concern with making conscious those truths hidden in "the memory of the process" (p. 316) is what moves me also in my proposed project on self-reflective learning through dialogue journals. By reviewing the dialogues that I maintained with my students, by creating narratives from them and by then later re-storying them via a follow-up interview I proceed along a somewhat similar path as Lanzara. I am aiming for a transformation of my participants, and myself, through a construction and reconstruction of narratives. As I extend my field study into a research report and try to bring others into an exemplary experience of that process (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994), I am constrained by some methodological issues.

There are some similarities in my aim for transformative effects in my participants and myself in various forms of psychotherapy. While my aim has been focused on art making and not person-making, and on teaching generally and specifically, my entry into

dialogue calls up the inter-relational themes explored by philosophers like Buber (1965) and Gadamer (1994), and also by recent commentators on the narrative aspects of psycho-analysis. Schafer (1989, 1992) delineates through example, how narrative characterizes psychoanalytic practice. His discussion and examples point out the reconstructive role of narrative and the difficulties that psychoanalysts and by extension all who delve into human experience run up against. The re-storying that psychoanalysis offers to its clients is complicated by resistance and transference, by a theory of the drives and by the struggle of “free association”. Out of these problems the analyst and the analysand construct, together, the story (ies) that justify the dialogue between the two.

I find the complexities of the relationship described by Schafer (1989, 1992) between the analyst and the analysand somewhat daunting in my project. I can see that such clinical phenomena as resistance and transference could be extended to characterize all human exchanges - and not all human exchanges are dedicated to understanding such phenomena. However, I was also encouraged because my own research focused on dialogues developed over time. Schafer’s discussion suggested how I could develop a narrative that would proceed by justifying the dialogues as they happened. In this way I could progressively “reveal” a sequence of events and understandings that would have some meaning at the termination of the dialogue. Of course, all such termini are conditional within the temporal framework. I cannot situate my project however in Schafer’s universe, although some of my participants showed a desire to do so. It would be better to situate what I am doing within what Schafer calls refined common sense. Even so, in my research project, insofar as I could consult with my participants on how I had narrated the dialogue that took place between us, and insofar as I could modify my story based on their feedback, I could see a reconstructive process similar to that Schafer describes.

What does all of this imply for my project? First of all I am looking in my dialogue journal sketchbooks for evidence of mutual self-reflective processes. Following writers like Schon (1982) and Wetherell and Noddings (1991) etc. these are conditioned by definitions of self-reflection that are individualistically based. I am focused on the

somewhat more indeterminate aspects of such dialogues and particularly the stories, the personal narratives of the participants. I am looking for the way that the dialogues developed between my participants and myself, and attempting to identify transformative, creative moments. In my inquiry into the dialogue journal sketchbooks, at least in part, I am proceeding in a narrative manner by constructing stories of the exchanges and then reconstructing them based on follow-up interviews. Out of this process, I maintain, comes some understanding of the whole shape of the exchanges and of their significance in the creative art making of my participants.

G. Words and Images in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Exchanges

Dialogues are entered into through the symbolic systems of interaction that we have created as cultures, and as we have dealt with our experience in the world. One of the fundamental assumptions that I make here is that words and images as symbolic systems support each other in creative thought and action. I note that for some persons, text, or written words, may exert a more powerful effect than spoken words. Studies of the relationship of word and image may be understood as foundational to the sketchbook and journaling practices of artists, and to the DJSB exchanges in my project. The emphasis I am placing on language as a partner in creative reflective art making supports the contextualizing aims of some more recent trends in arts education.

Although there are at least three different theories (Levie, 1987; pp. 9-15), on how images and words function together in a supportive manner, I have been partial to dual code theories (Arnheim, 1967, 1969, 1974; Paivio, 1991). Arnheim and Paivio have argued that the act of thinking itself is based on sensorial and particularly visual perception.

Arnheim in Visual Thinking (La Pensee Visuelle) (1969) looks carefully at the relationship played out between thought and language. He places his comments in the context of psychological and linguistic research, making use of those ideas that support his position, and arguing against those which do not. He locates the origins of his position

in his research on artistic thinking. He lets us know that the operations of the artistic mind are not unlike the operations of all minds. “Cette symbiose de la perception et de la pensée s’est révélée n’être pas inhérente au seul domaine de l’art”(p. 5).

For Arnheim, the thought and language of science and philosophy, particularly in its creative aspects, is also rooted in images. Issues such as abstract thought, generalizing thought etc., are traceable to those very senses and the images they generate. As he did in his studies of “Guernica,” in this text he resorts to his comments on Freud’s theory of the dream to show how images may show the relationships and connections usually established through conjunctions, prepositions etc.

Two key chapters deal with the place of words in thinking and the role of thought in art. Having already established more or less that one can think in images, he raises the question: “*Peut-on penser en mots?*” (p. 240). By reference to primate animal studies, he argues that language is not indispensable to thought (p. 241). However, language has special role in relationship to the images in which thought is carried out. Arnheim points out that: “*La fonction du langage est essentiellement conservatrice et stabilatrice*”(p. 257).

Thus language holds in place the cognition that images allow, evoke. He points out that language, to communicate, decontextualizes the three dimensional reality of images and produces a linear discourse, not one that admits of simultaneity.

Arnheim’s references to a grammar of images here and in other writings seems to suggest that Arnheim’s understanding of images itself is, oddly enough, linguistically based. In my project I see both language and image working together so I am less concerned than Arnheim to establish priorities. Rather I am concerned with how they support each other.

Paivio, reporting on cognitive experiments that link together the processing of imagery and language, seems to underwrite that position. He says that: “The general conclusion is that imagery and comprehension are closely related processes, particularly in the case of concrete sentences where imagery and comprehension can occur at comparable speeds”

(p. 119). Paivio links together the image making and word making activities of the mind and suggests that they contribute to the creative process. He points to research that shows that “visual imagery organizes our memory information in a synchronous fashion where the linguistic code stores information sequentially” (p. 268).

This allows imagery to be creative because it is not constrained by the linearity of words and language (p. 269). At the same time, language by providing a “logical flow to our ideas . . . [controls] . . . the associative leaps of imagery that might otherwise lapse into daydreams” (p. 269).

For these researchers, language, whether it follows imaged thought or works with it at the same time, is useful because it exercises a conservative influence, slowing down the stream of perception, narrowing our focus and allowing linear, discursive thought. Thus, language could provide the student a means of reflecting on what they are doing, and give them a moment’s pause in which to take stock and re-direct their creative impulse.

Considering the role of images in this process, W. Howard Levie (1987) points out that, while absolute conclusions are still not available in this area, since much research is uncoordinated and unlinked, evidence supports the inclusion of images with text for the purposes of improved memory retention (p. 10) and improved cognition (pp. 15-17).

Fish and Scrivener similarly express this conclusion in their brief discussion of sketching in the work of Da Vinci (1990). For the reader in the field of art education, their discussion of the relationship between depictive and propositional strategies in sketching, as well as illuminating the cognitive processes in sketching, opens up some observations on the use of language, spoken or written, as a means of facilitating creative thinking in relationship to sketching. By analogy, language, like sketches may describe loosely or state in a more precise manner. The former action, allows for multiple interpretations and therefore creative opportunity both for artist or writer. This is of special concern to various researchers today, both on the side of art education and on the side of literacy education (Bell, 1986; Szekely, 1982; Neu and Berglund, 1991, and Woodward, 1987).

Such implications for language and image research are not what Fish and Scrivener follow out. However, in their consideration of the problem of how sketches work to augment creativity, and in their placement of them in a cognitive continuum that runs from the concrete to the abstract (p. 118), they provide a useful theoretical construct from which I (and other art education practitioners and researchers) can begin to investigate some of the functions of the sketchbook and the relationship of language and image in that document. Fish and Scrivener point out that: “cognitive science suggests that the mind uses imagery and verbal processes for complementary and interdependent purposes. This suggests that it may be an error to separate, as we do, visual or depictive from propositional modes of education” (p 125). Like Levie, Paivio and, in his own way, Arnheim, they affirm the need of a continued linking of language and image processing in learning, in art education.

From the slightly different vantage point of linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point to the images at the root of much of our language interactions. They argue that our perceptions underwrite our conceptual, linguistic apparatus through metaphors, many of which are visual at a primary level. Language is permeated with our visual experience and as we speak or write we are constantly referencing that experience. This shifts the positions of Arnheim and Paivio slightly though it reinforces the idea that image and language are fundamentally linked in our thought processes. It also connects language and images to the same symbolic universe that artist/students might manipulate as they seek to think about and make art.

Lodge (1990) raises the question of what is appropriate for conveying in words and what for images. Although he points out that the visual arts can do “immediate justice” to the visible world, language, because of its associative power, is the ideal medium for conveying “meaning” (p. 153). He seems to suggest that the very literalness of the visual limits its associative capabilities. This implies some problems for my project for it seems to say that images are not as useful for conveying thought as are words.

Lodge is particularly concerned with narrative writing in which issues of time and causality are the prime material and these he contends are “neither . . . essentially visual” (p. 147). In his discussion of description in narrative, he emphasizes the visual economy that language can manage through use of synecdoche, metonym and metaphor. We don’t get the whole picture, only a part of it. Lodge goes on to point out that too many descriptive details impede our mental ability to form an image of what is being described (pp. 149-150). This both suggests an economy that language might lend to understanding images and their making because it would allow for specific focus and quicker comprehension, and also raises questions about our ability to link together images and words in a mirror-like fashion. Tropes such as metonymy may lead to ease of imagining but not to a one-to-one correspondence between the image and the “real” world being so described. If language can focus “meaning” in images then it appears as a useful device for learning about image making. However, if there is some kind of real variance in how images and words mean, then a simultaneous attempt to see them operating together could lead to misunderstandings.

Lodge’s interest in the power that narrative has to provide meaning and understanding is similar to that found in writers such as Polkinghorne (1988), Ricoeur (1988), Connelly and Clandinin (1990, 1991), Wetherell and Noddings (1991). These also emphasize the importance of narrative and hence language as a way to shape meaning and thinking. There is some suggestion of an approach to a solution in Paivio’s consideration of images operating as part of a synchronic symbol system while words operate in a linear, diachronic fashion (1991). In Paivio’s view images provide depth and words the narrative movement through time. Paivio maintains that the two systems operate co-operatively and seems to suggest that both words and pictures can provide meaning. Gombrich (1972) reaches a similar conclusion though for somewhat different reasons.

Lodge points to some of the problems in my consideration of a text linked to images. However if images can “mean” and not simply “do justice,” they may co-operate with language in student journals/sketchbooks to convey meaning.

At the same time, I am particularly heartened by Fish and Scrivener's discussion of sketching, which "is conducted both to clarify existing ideas and to develop new ones" (p. 117). Fish and Scrivener point out the need for artists to avoid premature decisions in their art thinking and the value that serendipity plays in provoking invention through the looser drawing procedures usually used in sketching. The discussion also sets out the processes of cognition involved particularly in terms of the relationship between observation and memory. Certainly studio instructors will likely find their exploration useful as it rationalizes common observational practices in drawing classes as well as memory drawing exercises found in instruction manuals, (e.g. Nicolaides' The Natural Way to Draw (1941,1969)). Most importantly, from my viewpoint it emphasizes the significance of the sketchbook to creative processing of visual information and it suggests by analogy how informal written notes about the sketches might work to support them in "complementary and interdependent ways" (Fish and Scrivener, 1990; p. 117).

The other question, which I try to address in my consideration of the images in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbooks (DJSB), is how to get at the relationship they bear to the text. However, since much of that seems methodologically oriented, I will consider it in the following chapter.

H. The role of an "exemplary" teaching practice

Teachers in a classroom will only use ideas derived from research if those ideas fit the "reality" of the everyday practice of the teacher. Other ideas, interpretations etc., will be discarded. Curriculum innovations then depend for their success on their being derived from, or related to, that which is practical for the teacher (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990, 1992; Schwab, 1970; Goodlad, 1992).

In the Ninety-Second Yearbook of the NSSE, The Arts, Education and Aesthetic Knowing, Csikszentmihalyi and Scheifle (1992) point out that "research on teaching in the arts has been rare and almost without any influence on the practice of teaching" (p. 187). In the same yearbook, Hargreaves and Galton (1992) argue, as did Eisner (1972),

for increased study of teachers' knowledge of the link between psychological development and aesthetic learning, noting that: "we lack an adequate theoretical base to inform the pedagogy of art teaching" (p. 146). In short, these researchers see that aesthetic activity and knowing is important, but exactly how this works itself out in the schools is unclear. What seems critical today, then, is a better understanding of the art-education teacher in the context of art education in the schools.

What I have aimed for in my study is an explanation of how a mutually self-reflective dialogue centered on the participants' and sometimes my own sketches gave rise to an emergent creativity within a wider art context. My written responses, comments etc., have been the source for understanding my role in this dialogue process. Following my study of the sentences of the interchange and the images, I used the constructed narratives of the dialogues to reveal that role in a contextual way. Central to this process seems to be the aesthetic experience as defined by Dewey (1934) as a guide to understanding the unity, or lack of unity, in the experience I underwent in the dialogue. In much the same way this is also true of how the participants underwent that same process.

Such a process seems appropriate to demonstrate for art educators because it will engage them, I hope, across a range of thought and feelings. An analytic procedure, using code assignments, established the framework of the exchange in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbooks (DJSB). It allowed me to identify mutually creative incidents that appeared during the exchanges. However, the move to narrative inquiry, which made use of both the constructed stories of the exchange and the follow-up interviews, revealed the shape of the exchange in the same way the artist/student participants gave shape to their work. Because creativity in art and in teaching assumes both primary and secondary process thinking and experiencing (Rose, 1980), it deals with the whole person and it allows for a grappling with existential problems beyond the range of rational science (Cziksztentmihalyi and Scheifle, 1992). The story of such research, such as I contend can be found in my project, I believe, could strongly and intrinsically motivate art teachers to consider adopting such a practice as the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook (DJSB). On the other hand, it could act as a warning.

Indeed, some commentators on the role of educational research, as I have noted above, have been decidedly pessimistic as to the likelihood of research affecting practice. Others (Goodman, 1960, 1964, 1971; Henry, 1971; Bourdieu and Passeron 1970,1998) have suggested that schools seem constructed to prevent creative reflective activities, that they are in fact repressive and not open to the changes that research might be expected to bring.

Even so, this report conceives of the teacher-readers of this report as vicarious partners in the research and in any following moves in curriculum or pedagogy (Connelly and Clandinin, 1992; Goodlad, 1992; Hollingsworth and Sockett, 1994). Such “exemplary” accounts (Stake, 1994; Morse, 1994) as I propose to present in my report of teacher practices can encourage others, I believe, to accept those practices. This approach is borne out by the work of Connelly and Clandinin, (1988, 1990, 1994), Wetherell and Noddings, (1991). It appears to me to be what directed Beittel (1972) in his case study approach and Zurmuehlen in hers (1990). Teachers are persuaded by the experience of other teachers and exemplary stories, brought to bear within clear education contexts, teach (Carter, 1993). Affirming this is my overarching goal in this report. I cannot however suggest even at this early point in my report that I was totally successful within the confines of the DJSB exchange. Why this was so will be a part of my “exemplary” thesis.

Chapter Three: Doing It: The Methodology of the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project

A. Paradigmatic and grounding presumptions

1. Introduction

My paradigmatic position is primarily a constructivist-interpretive one. In what follows I outline my particular take on what that means for my methodology. I also point to some following assumptions related to art education and curriculum development. This position, while derived from my reading of ethnographic literature (Atkinson. 1992; Delamont, 1992; Hammersley, 1992; Spradley 1980), also reflects that taken by some art educators at different times (Beittel, 1972,1973; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1992).

a. “Reality” is an interpretive construction achieved through dialogue

I assume that “reality,” as a term designating how we interpret the world that we perceive sensorially, is a construct based on the interactions between persons in a culture (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lincoln and Guba, 1988, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). What we believe to be the case about the world we experience proceeds from mutual interpretations within a cultural framework. Accordingly, interpretive dialogue is a necessary means of establishing and re-establishing for us what is going on.

b. Dialogue is based on mutual reflection

Dialogue, to be successful, must be based on a mutual reflection by the participants, including the researcher, upon the “facts” of the situation, whatever they are. We can carry out self-reflective activities but, since we are only able to do so from individual frames of reference, we need the input of others to extend our interpretations, realizations etc. Such dialogue is a process of mutually refining perceptions over a period of time, not

a one-time vote by the participants. The work of Donald Schon (1982, 1985, 1987, 1991), Lanzara (1991), Connelly and Clandinin (1991), Wetherell and Noddings (1991) seem to be a warrant for such a conclusion about the importance of time to any mutual, reflective dialogue. Dewey's Art as Experience (1934), which discusses the dialogue relationship between the artist and his audience, is another such warrant.

c. Words and images support each other

Dialogues are entered into through the symbolic systems of interaction that we have created as cultures as we have dealt with our experience in the world. One of the fundamental assumptions that I make here is that words and images as symbolic systems support each other in cognition. As well, text, or written words, may exert a more powerful effect than spoken words for some persons.

Rudolph Arnheim (1967, 1969, 1974), and Allan Paivio (1991) have argued that the act of thinking itself is based on sensorial and particularly visual perception. Language follows such imaged thought (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and is useful because it exercises a conservative influence, slowing down the stream of perception, narrowing our focus and allowing linear, discursive thought. Thus, language could provide the student a means of reflecting on what they are doing, and give them a moment's pause in which to take stock and re-direct their creative impulse.

d. The dialogic and hermeneutic process of re-interpretation leads to understanding

To understand a situation, simple or complex, we engage in interpretations and re-interpretations through our symbolic systems of what we, as far as we can tell, think is that situation. This is an ongoing process analogous to the hermeneutic discipline of text interpretation (Gadamer, 1994). It produces narratives or quasi-narratives (Eisner, 1992; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Ricoeur, 1988). The shape of these narratives, understood as plot, brings us understanding of the events, texts, etc. in whose interpretation we have been engaged. From an art education perspective, such narratives

are linked to aesthetic understanding (Dewey, 1934; Beittel, 1972; Eisner, 1992).

e. “Trustworthiness” is connected to interpretations of empirical materials

I look to the naturalistic paradigm of Lincoln and Guba (1985). They and other ethnographic researchers (Atkinson, 1992; Hammersley, 1992; Spradley, 1980) recommend a number of things to give trustworthiness to one’s work:

- i. Finding empirical materials that can be constructively interpreted in some way.
- ii. Using more than one site to produce at least a partial triangulation.
- iii. Obtaining participant interpretive feedback reflecting on the initial write-up of the materials.
- iv. Auditing the empirical material, both collection and writing up procedures. This might imply, for example, a review of coding procedures by some person external to the doctoral committee. It might involve comparing coding categories and procedures in similar projects.

f. Research situations should tend to the symmetrical

The research situation should tend to the symmetrical in power relations. While this may be an ethically desirable stance reflecting various axiologies (Buber, 1965; Gadamer 1994; Habermas, 1990), I also think, following my other assumed positions, that, procedurally, it would produce a better map of the “reality” under consideration in the research project. It also suggests that reflective disclosure on the part of the researcher, parallel to the disclosures of the other participants is a necessary part of the research process.

2. Methodology and Paradigmatic Assumptions

My methodology reflects my paradigmatic assumptions and the work of other art researchers into developing artwork and the creative process. Like Beittel (1972, 1973)

and Zurmuehlen (1990), I am assuming that the experience of making art is dependent on the artist's understanding of her/his stream of consciousness within a context. Thus, the subjective and interpretive reports of the artist are central to any art education research activity that seeks to understand that creative process in an art education studio classroom. I have obtained these subjective reports by entering into a "special participant observer" relationship with my participants that took place over time and in which I acted "more as a nurturing friend than as a disciplined self-conscious observer" (Beittel, 1972; p. 20). The "dialogue", about the art making and the art made, established between myself and the student-artist participants, provided access to both my own and the participants' interpretation of their own creative process. (See Winnicott (1971) for a similar idea.)

Beittel (1972) began his research with single student-artists in studio-laboratory settings but did not proceed to more complex social settings such as the classroom because of the increased complexity that such situations would impose on understanding the creative process. In my case, however, I have proceeded directly to the classroom studio and I will outline the nature of those studio classes in three sites below. Following Beittel (1972), the earlier example of Marion Milner (1957) and others, I note that commitment of the researcher to follow the process of the student-artists over time is necessary. Thus my project reports on exchanges over eight to nine-week periods.

Beittel outlines different kinds of reports that would emerge from the dialogues. Some are more or less descriptive, but in them Beittel allows for the voice of the subject to speak and to carry the narrative of the art-process. Other reports are "historical-interpretive" and derive much of their form from the narratives of ethnography (Beittel, 1972, p. 21; Van Maanen, 1988; Atkinson, 1990). Such reports stand close to concrete experience and depend on a reflective process on the part of the researcher, a willingness to expose his or her assumptions, activities etc. This stance does away with "objective" results but by contextualizing them gives them "credibility" (Lincoln and Guba, pp. 294-296). Overall the nature of the expressive and aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1934) emerges in an expressive and aesthetic manner linking means and ends appropriately. Out of this, new

“images” of the art-student emerge. Both my stance and my thesis follow upon this.

Beittel, and those researchers reported on by Zurmuehlen (1990), established their dialogues orally. My project was dependent on establishing such dialogues through writing in the dialogue journal sketchbook. While my use of text marks a shift from Beittel’s approach, I believe that I preserve Beittel’s concerns while extending his method. I also believe that I introduce more clearly from the text materials, a study of the role that I, as the participant observer, play in the reciprocally reflective, dialogue process.

B. Collecting empirical material

1. Introduction

I carried out three projects enabling me to collect text and image materials dealing with the mutually reflective and creative dialogues between student-artist participants and myself. I have, on hand, materials (approximately 500 pages of text and images) representing these dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges between 32 students and myself in three different sites: Concordia University, Sheridan College, and University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM). At Concordia, the “Pilot Project” site, I had 11 participants, in a class of 12 (91%). At Sheridan College I had 11 participants in a class of 30 (37%). At the University of Toronto I had 10 participants over two classes totaling 38 students (26%).

My approach varied from site to site but the essentials were as follows:

2. Access

In each case I had access because I was teaching the students in question in a studio course. At Concordia, I confirmed that access in negotiation with my supervisor in the studio course, Dr. Andrea Fairchild. At Sheridan College, in the School of Applied Arts, I

confirmed that access with Bill Adcock, the Coordinator of the Liberal Studies Program. For the U of T students, who were enrolled in a program called Art and Art History and who were co-enrolled at Sheridan and the University of Toronto, Mississauga campus (UTM), I confirmed access through Dean of the School of Visual Arts at Sheridan, Don Graves.

3. Participation

Participation was voluntary. The participants signed a release form giving me research access to the materials that we jointly produced. I agreed to certain follow-up activities, including checking my interpretations against those of my participants in a follow-up interview.

4. Preparation

In two cases, at Concordia and with the UTM students, I taught the students for one semester before introducing the dialogue journal sketchbook in the second semester. This allowed me to build rapport with the group. With the Liberals Studies Students at Sheridan, I carried out the project within one semester, but I did not introduce it until about one third of the way through the course. As well, in this latter case, I used interviews in the first half of the semester to help build and maintain rapport.

C. Site Variations

Each site was different, involved differing students at varying levels, and each involved the participants in learning different art practices or procedures.

1. The Concordia Site: The Pilot Project

At Concordia I taught a Studio class to students in their pre-service year of an Art Education Program. Students were going out to teach in elementary or primary schools

eventually. The curriculum was determined by the students' own art interests and my aim to teach them how to maintain an art practice while teaching. There was no specific text for the course and the students/participants were primarily engaged in making art and discussing their process. This went on orally in the first semester, and in the first few weeks of the second semester prior to the beginning of the field practicum. I had an entire semester here to acclimatize the participants to the idea of an oral classroom dialogue prior to beginning their own individual exchanges with me via the DJSB. This was the first time I attempted the exchange, and so the Concordia site functioned as a pilot study. Under the direction of Dr. Andrea Fairchild I established the procedures, the initial analytic tools and the categories that I would apply across the three sites. At Concordia, the students in this initial project submitted entries to me each week for eight weeks. These consisted of images and related texts that were focused on their final projects, which were to be exhibited in a year-end show. I replied each week.

2. The Sheridan Site

At Sheridan the Liberal Studies students were in the first year of a college diploma program. Most were unsure about their future career choices. They took my course, which focused on visual literacy, as an option, some out of interest, many because of timetable or course selection constraints. I used a text Understanding Visual Literacy by Donis A. Dondis (1973) that had as its premise the Gestalt psychology that underlies much of the modernist approach to art making. Thus the students learned about a formal analysis of images prior to beginning their DJSB exchange. I had these students for one semester so I introduced the ideas on which they were to base any formal analysis of images that they would make for the sketchbook. I also interviewed these students a couple of times before the exchange began so that they would feel they had a personal context for the exchange. The students, during the last eight weeks of the course, produced a weekly image and wrote a comment about it. There was no cumulative project towards which these image-making exercises were directed. As at Concordia I wrote a weekly response.

3. The UTM/Sheridan Site

The UTM/Sheridan students were in the first year of a Bachelor's Degree in Art and Art History, a joint program of the University of Toronto and Sheridan College. Some hoped to go on to art careers in galleries, as writers and as artists usually via an MFA program. Some students went on to become art historians. Others usually considered going into teaching via teacher's college or Faculty of Education programs. They had a semester to get ready for the DJSB. During that semester they followed a specific procedure for each four-week project. They had to collect visual information, develop sketches of images they would use in their compositions and develop sketches of their compositions. They had to present these with oral comments to the entire class each week. I responded orally to these presentations, as did other students.

Each four-week sequence of development led to a final drawing. In the second semester I devoted the last eight weeks to the DJSB exchange. In this situation, I wrote my comments in response to the participants during the class while they worked on drawings from the life model or from still life arrangements. In the other two sites I had taken the material away to write my comments.

The first and last site had some commonalties though their year level separated them. The second site was the most different.

D. The focus of the exchanges

The exchanges were focused, for all sites, on student-generated art images presented in a sketchbook in which the student reflected on their process. For two of the sites, Concordia and University of Toronto, the dialogues about the image production were focused on the development of longer-term art making projects. For the other site, Sheridan College, the weekly discussions about the images produced were self-sufficient,

and not directed towards developing longer-term art making projects.

E. My response

I wrote weekly responses to the student submissions focusing on the role that Beittel specifies: the “nurturing-friend” .On a couple of occasions I included responsive thumbnail sketches that I thought might be of use to the participants. My responses were spontaneous and did not reflect a commitment to a specific model of teaching or of creative practice. I tried to follow the student in my responses to their writing and to their images.

F. Participant summary essays

All of the participants at Concordia or U of T /Sheridan wrote summary comments on the exchange. The Liberal Studies students at Sheridan had the option of producing either a summary essay or a summary artwork. Most outlined what they thought had occurred in the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange and evaluated its use to them. A few wrote about the process in a peripheral way requiring me to try and determine linkages to the actual exchange. For example, one student, rather than assessing the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange wrote an assessment of his own art making activities over the period of the exchange.

G. Reflecting on the empirical material

1.The text materials in the DJSB

I collected a large body of materials that seem to indicate a successful interaction between the participants and myself in terms of the production of art-images. I carried out a self-reflective reconstruction of those exchanges. This involved a number of stages, which I deal with below in a section on my coding and reconstructive interpretations of the dialogue materials.

In this process, following some suggestions from Dr. Fairchild, I employed text analysis, using semantic categories and the narrative and hermeneutic reconstruction of the DJSB text exchanges. Here I was adopting, though not in all details, two of the orientations to text analysis that Ettinger and Maintland-Gholson (1990) have laid out as a guide to text analysis in Art education research. Both semantic interpretations and narrative hermeneutic approaches depend upon contextual factors and internal relationships arrived at through reconstructive interpretation.

2. The images in the DJSB

I have introduced images into my research report in various ways. I represent the images through xerographic and photographic reproductions. The images from the sketchbooks of my participants I photocopied. This produced a less precise image than with photography, but since I was collecting images from my studio classes each week it was simply expedient to collect the images in that manner. The final images that resulted at the Concordia site and at the UTM/Sheridan site I did record photographically. At the Concordia site those final images were presented in a show and one of the participants kindly took photos of the pieces. In the case of the UTM/Sheridan site I was able to hold the images for a longer period of time since I was assessing them, and during that period of time I took the photos. All of the xerographic and photographic images I scanned using Photoshop™ and I present these in the narrative sections of Chapters 4 through 6.

3. Choosing the candidates for text and image coding

To make the research process manageable I selected eight participants from my initial larger group of participants at all three sites. I chose my selected participants for coding following the pattern I established in the pilot project at the Concordia site

At the Concordia site, where this project originated in the pilot study using the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook, my choices were determined by the process and outcomes of the

pilot. I chose one male, partly because he was the only male participant and partly because his work was about or connected to the somewhat political situation in Québec. I chose two female candidates. One of them seemed to epitomize a creatively reflective art-maker and she produced good work. The other, although she produced good work as well, seemed to be proceeding almost totally intuitively and in a non-reflective manner. This established a pattern across the sites. I sought out at least one male and one female at each of the other sites, and I also looked for apparent “successful” and “non-successful” DJSB participants. As well, unusual participant characteristics, such as the political involvement of the Concordia male participant, had some influence on my choices.

At the Sheridan site I chose one male and one female. Both of them seemed to have some reflective capacity. The male’s text seemed to flow from an unusual mixture of Christian fundamentalism and “Jimmy Dean” rebelliousness. The female’s text seemed connected in some way with issues that I called “of concern to a woman.”

At the UTM/Sheridan site I again chose one male because he was the only male participant and because, although he produced excellent work he wrote very little. Both of the women were from Northern Ireland, like Québec a locus of political instability. One was a young student and the other a mature student. One of them also seemed to epitomize a creative and reflective art-practice. The other, although she wrote extensively and did many sketches, seemed less open, as I saw it.

Thus my choices were to some extent pragmatic but, where possible, I tried to find what seemed to be examples of successful participants and examples of less successful participants in terms of creative reflective thinking. Part of my goal was to see where the discontinuities lay (Perkins 1981).

Once I had collected the material of the exchange I set out to reconstruct the dialogues that had taken place into narratives that would convey the shape of the exchange as it related to the art making process in which the participants were engaged. I wanted to present this to the participants for confirmation, clarification etc. To do this in a

responsible way I decided to analyze both the text and the images in order to clarify what had actually happened. My initial approach to both text and images was through coding. In this process I followed the example of other dialogue journal researchers, from which I had started (Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, 1988,1993; Turewicz, 1988; Greaves, 1991). I also turned to Van Dijk's Handbook of Discourse Analysis (1985) for help in my construction of a text analysis of the material that I had collected. I also looked to the work of various ethnographic methodologists (Spradley,1980; Hammersly,1992; Tesch, 1990). I was trying to find out if the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook (DJSB) had contributed positively or negatively to the students' final art project based on my understanding of creative reflective art making. (See previous chapter).

4. Developing the text codes

a. Introduction

Within that “yes-no” inquiry, and following the examples of other dialogue journal researchers I tried to work out narrower categories or domains. I did that in a journal (Collins, 1993) in which I kept a running commentary on my pilot project. I was moving at a fairly abstract level at first trying to find ways to use terms like cognitive, affective etc., as a basis for analysis. However, a review of the data for one student in the pilot project, “Marie” (a self-chosen pseudonym), gave me some ideas on how to establish more concrete domains for analysis. I began to work out a list of categories for both teacher and student responses, and using these, did a preliminary analysis of three students. After this preliminary analysis, at the pilot site, Concordia, I decided to revise the categories and apply them to both teacher and student responses. This was a move towards some economy and partly influenced by Beittel's moves to condense his code categories (1972). In this process I was also somewhat influenced by Strauss' concepts of how coding categories may be progressively refined through reflective notes and memos written by the researcher about the ways in which the coding process influences her understanding (1987, 1996). At that stage I laid out the code categories which follow.

b. Revised integrated codes for both student and teacher

1. Stories
2. Autobiographical responses
3. Explicative
4. Directions and suggestions
5. Descriptions
6. Referrals
7. Admonitions, advice
8. Support, solidarity, encouragement
9. Mirroring
10. Continuity
11. Definitions
12. Values, beliefs, wishes
13. Appreciation, liking
14. Noting significance, interest.
15. Noting image text relationships
16. Questions
17. Comments on school
18. Complaints, doubts
19. Dislikes
20. Affective responses.

c. Comparing text codes

In lieu of an audit of my codes I reviewed them by setting them against similar codings developed by Shuy (1988, 1993) and Greaves (1991) in their studies of dialogue journals. I found that they used similar categories and that they had arrived at them in a manner similar to my own. In this I was attempting to meet at least part of Lincoln and Guba's demand for a peer code review.

d. Code definitions for Shuy and Greaves

Both Shuy and Greaves also developed definitions of their coding categories and then presented examples of the texts so coded. I followed their approach, again developing definitions as I carried out my coding.

e. My text codes

Clearly my study was different than those of Greaves or Shuy, and yet, since I was in the realm of the dialogue journal, I found them a useful starting point. I took this as a partial warrant that my coding procedures were adequate and that my categories were appropriate. I did not engage a secondary coder to test those categories though I did develop definitions of them, which I linked to examples. I did this in a preliminary way with one participant from the Concordia Site Pilot, Marie, before I began my overall coding. Following is an example of one of those definitions.

1. Stories

These were sentences in which the students or myself related stories about whatever was going on in our lives or had gone on in our lives. These were specific references to incidents with characters and were, in a way, short narrative units. I hadn't expected to include such a category in my code assignments to Marie's text, but stories proved important from the first in some of the student texts.

A sentence, which I coded as "story" made reference to stories that Marie was using in her developing artwork:

Tante Ilse's and Mrs. V's stories were subtly different, as all personal stories are I guess, and by trying to bunch them all together in one story I think I was

trivializing their uniqueness and the very personal ways they are struggling/struggled with becoming old. (March 28, 1993)

Another kind of story reference occurred when someone simply told a story. For example during this same exchange, referring to a woman that I had known who had a stroke, I wrote: "It seemed like she had left her body and although she continued to function and even regained some of her powers, it was as if her soul had left" (March 3, 1997).

This approach follows Dialogue Journal Researchers like Shuy and Greaves but also more or less follows on Lincoln and Guba's methodological comments (1988).

f. Characterizing the DJSB exchanges through coding

These definitions enabled me to carry out an analysis of three students in the Concordia Pilot and my responses for one day, March 16, 1993. In order to be able to characterize the exchanges in which I was engaged. I wanted to specify my own practices and show how they related to the practices of my students. Using the code categories I had derived from the material I was able to characterize my exchange with one of the students, "Marie", on March 16, 1993 as follows:

8 of the statements focus on providing the student with explanations and instruction while 5 refer to the student to other sources of information. Thus, there is a highly informative aspect to this response.

4 responses focus on the significance of what the student is doing from the teacher's view. This is directive in a supportive way. The student is being told that she is doing what is 'right.' There are also five responses that support, recognize or encourage the student. These latter responses are reinforcing devices. (March 16, 1993)

Thus, my response was informative and supportive.

These kind of exploratory coding activities led in some cases to refinements in the definitions or in their applications until I had a working set of definitions.

5. Coding the images

a. Introduction

I was less sure of my classification approach when it came to the students' drawing. However, since the drawings either were preparatory or non-preparatory, vis-à-vis the final project, that gave me a general subdivision. I was also able to consider them in terms of their relative technicality. Did they show construction details (measurements, materials etc.) or were they simply illustrative in a general, sketchy sense? I also looked at whether the drawings or sketches indicated installation details. This gave me a rough classification system, which I supported by reference to Beittel (1973), Berelson (1952), Ball and Smith (1992) and Strauss (1987).

My main approach reflected that of Berelson, as I tried to establish codes that designated, from my viewpoint, how the images were used in the interchanges. However, rather than coding for content I coded for function, looking to understand the images in the same "semantic" frame of reference that I had used for the text coding.

As with my text codes I looked at one participant first, established definitions and then applied them to my coding procedures. Again this led to refinements.

b. Image code definitions

Following is an example of the definitions that I developed for the image codes with instances of their application.

1. "illustrates text"

The first code application that I will consider is "illustrates text," one of the most important categories because it was one of the most common. The participants quite often included their images to illustrate comments that they made about their work in progress. At the same time these images had characters of their own and other codes helped me to emphasize that aspect of them as well.

The first image presented by Marie on February 9, 1993 was a xeroxed color reproduction taken from a slide of Mexican figures made of papier mache' (Chapter Four, p. 154). Marie's text was closely linked to this image and both text and image were intelligible in terms of each other. The images, as presented to myself as the reader, illustrated Marie's observations about them.

Marie wrote:

These papier-mâché nativity players are from Mexico and have fascinated me since I first saw them. I did a painting of them 3 years ago and another this Christmas (It was too big for the envelope or I would have shown it to you). This year's painting and the series of slides focused on trying to capture that elusive quality that intrigues me so much. I can't quite put my finger on what it is- maybe it's that air of mystery about them; they seem to live somewhere else, to be a part of an existence I am excluded from. They are frozen in time-or at least their beautiful shells are; the part I could possibly have connected with is long gone (February 9, 1993).

In another example from the Sheridan site, a small landscape sketch by Joey R., the image illustrates an explicative text that explains how the drawing was done. The marks in the drawing function to illustrate the explanation for the reader-viewer.

A Clear Day (October 31, 1993 J6) (Chapter Four, p. 197) is a drawing of a landscape, a

mountainous region, a forest, a lake, the sky, etc. Visually the emphasis is on cross-hatching to separate forms. This tends to create some agitation as the eye tries to sort out the cross-hache marks.

Joey R wrote:

For this particular journal I decided obviously to do a normal outdoor scene using line. I wanted basically to use line and the direction it is pointed as a way of giving contrast.

For example, on the cliff, (picture) different formations are actually shaped with different lines pointed in different directions. (October 31, 1993)

c. Image code comparisons

That this methodology is significantly useful in assessing visual material is clear on a commonsense basis. Technically this is the method used by Collier (1967) and by other visual ethnographers (Worth, 1981; Bellman and Bennetta, 1977). The subtlety of these latter studies, based on filmed records of anthropological subjects, is expressed in the theoretical approach to the establishing the categories for counting. As well, this approach is like that of Spradley (1980) in his participant observation.

In Spradley's ethnographic methodology, counting occurrences and deriving descriptive inferences reflects Berelson's approach, more or less. However, Lincoln and Guba point to some significant differences between traditional content analysis and ethnographic or naturalistic analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p. 336 ff.). In the latter the categories are subject to constant revision as the analysis proceeds and so the counting is constantly being re-directed by an ongoing analytic activity. In my own research I have tended to this latter approach as I revised the codes for the image use as I went. This followed much the same procedure as that with my linguistic code building.

It also reflected the coding efforts of Beittel (1972) in his study of serial drawings. Beittel worked with students developing drawings over a period of time. He sought to specify two kinds of strategies in those drawings and developed codes, initially for each type. Later he developed one set of codes that focused on the formal processes employed by both types of drawing. I was not after the same thing. I wanted to follow the way in which the DJSB exchange facilitated the creative and reflective process of the participants and myself as the teacher. However, as with my text codes I wanted to set my ideas against a similar set of codes partly to affirm that I was on the right path. Some of Beittel's eighteen codes (p. 75) proved directly applicable to my situation. For example, his #16: "Size relationships manipulated." I adopted for my code #27: "Resized Images". Unlike Beittel I did not specify that as a divergent strategy since I was not interested in the issue of style or approach to creative drawing. His #17: "Theme and variation of same element" I adapted for my #22: "Modified Image Shape". His #18: "Organic and Progressive Development" affected all of my codes from 21-28, which deal with image development and change. I took such parallels as an affirmation that my coding processes were on the right track. I was also influenced by Beittel's groupings of his code categories.

Beittel, for example, under "Segmented Form and Space" placed "a) Formal distortion; b) Plane; c) Size Manipulated; d) Theme and Variation". I did not follow his process in detail but used the idea of grouping in my image codes and text codes.

When I considered the texts and coded them I often found that a sentence (the code unit) could be coded in more than one category. This was true of the image code application and even more so since I coded the whole image and not, as with text, a part of it, as in the sentences. Since the images had multiple functions in the DJSB exchanges, they received, in many cases, multiple codes.

d. The emergent image codes

The codes that I arrived at originally as I worked on Marie's images were 20 in number.

e. Further code revision for text and image coding

As I experimented with both text and image codes I found that I needed some further modifications. I needed to take some notice in my text codes of image issues and of the development of ideas over the DJSB exchanges.

From the image side I found that I had originally not taken into account the changes in images that would indicate the movement of the participants' ideas as expressed in the images. These observations resulted in two final code lists for text and for image production.

i) Final revised integrated codes for both student and teacher texts.

1. Stories
2. Autobiographical responses
3. Explicative
4. Directions and suggestions
5. Descriptions
6. Referrals
7. Admonitions, advice
8. Support, solidarity, encouragement
9. Mirroring
10. Continuity
11. Definitions
12. Values, beliefs, wishes
13. Appreciation, liking
14. Noting significance, interest
15. Noting image text relationships
16. Questions
17. Comments on school

18. Complaints, doubts
19. Dislikes
20. Affective responses
21. Image and Compositional Issues
22. New idea/theme
23. Repeated idea/theme
24. Developed idea/theme
25. Framed idea/theme
26. Re-framed idea/theme

ii) Final revised codes for sketchbook images

- 1 - illustrates text
- 2 - interprets text, other images
- 3 - poetic, evokes emotion
- 4 - shows detail
- 5 - shows compositional idea
- 6 - shows installation idea
- 7 - explains construction
- 8 - seeks to persuade
- 9 - realistic, representational
- 10 - symbolic
- 11 - abstract
- 12 - diagrammatic
- 13 - decorative
- 14 - indicates boundaries, limits
- 15 - marks with unclear meanings, relationships
- 16 - functions pictorially
- 17 - functions linguistically
- 18 - on separate page
- 19 - on same page with related text

- 20 - other images than drawings e.g. slides, photos, computer drawings
- 21 - repeated image
- 22 - modified image shape
- 23 - combined images
- 24 - additional or new images
- 25 - repositioned images
- 26 - dropped image
- 27 - resized image
- 28 - perspectival modifications

About half of these were descriptive of the character of images themselves but for the most part they reflected functional relationships of the images to the texts. These were developed in a similar fashion to the text codes. With the first twenty codes I developed I coded the images with the three participants in the Concordia pilot. Then when I realized the absence of categories that showed change or development from week to week, I added the last eight codes and re-coded the images. My definitions of the codes I developed as I went along, much in the same way I developed the text code definitions.

H. Constructing narratives from the DJSB exchange

1. Introduction

Following my literature review, I believe that story, or more precisely, the shaping power of narrative, plays a significant role in the educative process. This is both in terms of providing deeper understanding of the experience of teachers and students and as a device to convey to a reader those same experiences (Carter 1993; Atkinson, 1990; Josselin and Leiblich, 1995; Bruner, 1990; Noddings and Wetherell, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 1993). With that in mind I resolved to take a series of steps that I hoped would both demonstrate this, and also explore the role that personal narrative played in the creative reflective activity expressed through the DJSB exchanges.

In order to recreate my experience of the DJSB exchange I needed to construct narratives of those exchanges; these would represent what I thought had occurred and express the experience of the DJSB as a temporal process, rather than as a set of categories. This would represent the experience more closely than I could via coding and it would emphasize the dynamic of the exchange, the emergence of a plot (Ricoeur, 1988), characteristic of reflected-upon events in time. This would also give me a starting point for dealing with my participants in the follow-up reviews in which I wished to engage.

My write-up of the material into narratives represented an interpretive move in itself and one of my goals is to make that move as transparent as possible. My descriptive narrative interpretations, derived from the material generated in the dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges, seem to me to fit into Beittel's historical-interpretive category. They also reflect Manning and Cullum-Swan's discussion of narrative analysis in the Handbook of Qualitative Research (Denzin, Lincoln, 1994). I am defining descriptive interpretive narratives as stories with a "beginning, middle and end that reveal someone's experiences" (p. 465). They are ethnographic in nature, and reflect the empirical material; in this case, the dialogue journal-sketchbooks that were developed over several weeks, in their construction, their "emplotment" (Ricoeur, 1988), and the themes and metaphors that I hope to identify.

2. Procedures

My procedures in writing the narratives included 1. Coding the text and image exchanges to establish the rhetorical character of those exchanges and the ways in which text and image related to each other in the exchanges; 2. Writing thematic summaries of each exchange in order to: construct a narrative of the each entire individual dialogue journal exchange. In this I was sensitive to studies of mutual self-reflective practice in a studio context (Schon, 1985; Beittel, 1972; Zurmuehlen, 1990) and to the concept of emplotment in narrative constructions (Ricoeur, 1988; Polkinghorne, 1988); 3. Looking for emerging creative moves on the part of the participants according to the various ways they are defined in the literature to which I refer in the previous chapter. In this I wished

to see how they related to narrative, story and mutual reflection in practice

3. Writing about the images in narrative form

To successfully construct narratives from this material I have followed the image production process as it is reflected in the text material, that is, my writing and the students' writing. This is essentially what Arnheim did in his study of the development of "Guernica" (1962). Accordingly I have reproduced images of the student sketches, and in some case finished work, and I have linked my narratives and my interpretive comments to those images (See Chapters Four, Five and Six). The interaction between the students and myself was highly contextualized by the classroom, the particular programs and courses involved, by the very conventions of art education. I have tried to bring these contextual and subjective elements out in my text-image analyses, to show the mutual shaping (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) that went on in our dialogue around these images and their making. My final considerations of the shapes that the dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges took, reflect something of the types of reports that Beittel has described as emerging from dialogues between artist/student and teacher. Such reports stand close to concrete experience and depend on a reflective process on the part of the researcher, a willingness to expose his or her assumptions, activities etc. This stance does away with "objective" results but by contextualizing them gives their construction "credibility" (Lincoln and Guba, pp. 294-296). Overall the nature of the experience (Dewey, 1934) emerges in an expressive and aesthetic manner linking the process and the outcomes appropriately. Out of this, new "images" of the art student emerge.

I. Building the narrative dimension of the DJSB exchanges through summaries of the codes

1. Introduction

My process in constructing the original narratives was to take the coded texts and images for the participants, and myself, and to write summaries of them based on the text and

image code categories. I brought the individual content or imagery of the participant into these summaries. From the summaries I constructed a basic narrative of the exchange. This was very close to a simple chronological retelling of the DJSB exchanges.

Next, in the interest of linking this narrative to the ideas of mutual reflective and creative process, which had informed the coding exercise, I wrote analytic and interpretive narratives. Through reflection upon the events I aimed to highlight the meaning, shape and plot of the exchanges, as I saw it. Later I presented both the original chronological narrative and the analytic and interpretive narratives to the participants. To show how I constructed the chronological narratives, in the following pages I present one of the “narrative bases,” as I called them, and the summaries that I constructed for all of the participants.

I should note that the original intent in my thesis proposal had been to develop these narratives as the end result of my research. I moved away from that for three reasons.

First, I realized that I could make the reflective and creative thinking processes of the participants available through my coding, if I could link the functional codes of the text and image analysis with models of creative and reflective thinking and acting. (See Chapter Eight for discussion of this.) Secondly, I wanted to show that the narratives could be connected to a functional coding process that was based on other researchers’ approaches in the fields of dialogue journal studies and art education studies. I thought this would lend greater credence to the narratives. Thirdly, I came to the conclusion, fairly early in the research process, following some conversations with my advisor, Dr. Pariser, and a review of Lincoln and Guba (1988), that I would have to rely upon a re-assessment of my narrative constructions, which were based on the coding process, to find out why most of the participants in the DJSB exchange had not fully realized its potential. The means to this was through follow-up interviews, with each of the participants, to determine the verisimilitude of my narrative constructions. This shifted my pilot proposal based on the idea of an affirmative exemplar derived from only narrative case studies to a more ambiguous exploration of my narratives of the DJSB

from the participants' viewpoint.

2. Construction of the narratives from the function codes: text and image

Below I present examples of the narrative bases I developed up from my original coding processes of the DJSB exchange. These include coded texts and images as well as summaries. I then go on to show in a brief example how the summaries welded into the basic chronological narrative. Following that I introduce the interpretive narratives for each participant indicating how I framed my reflective process. Then I will present the interpretive narratives for each participant. The entire narrative base here is a direct transcription from my memos and notes (Collins, 1993).

a) Narrative Base

February 9, 1993

i) Image from Marie coded

A slide of Mexican figures made of papier-mâché. See Marie's text and mine for a description of the slide image (Chapter Four, p. 154).

Codes assigned: 1,3,4,8,10,13, 16,18,19,20,22, 24, 25

- 1 - illustrates text
- 3 - poetic, evokes emotion
- 4 - shows detail
- 8 - seeks to persuade
- 10 - symbolic
- 13 - decorative
- 14 - indicates boundaries, limits
- 16 - functions pictorially

- 18 - on separate page
- 19 - on same page with related text
- 20 - other images than drawings e.g. slides, photos, computer drawings
- 22 - modified image shape
- 24 - additional or new images
- 25 - repositioned images

ii) Text from Marie and code assignments (codes embedded in text)

February 9, 1993

18/6/22 It was difficult to decide which of the slides to show you - 13/25 I'm really pleased with how a lot of them turned out. 3/6/24 I chose this one though for this week, 12 hoping its rather "seasonal air" would not be too out of date yet.

3/6/25 These papier-mache' nativity players are from Mexico and 14/2 have fascinated me since I first saw them. 3/2/6/25 I did a painting of them 3 years ago and another this Christmas. (It was too big for the envelope or I would have shown it to you.) 14/2/21/22 This year's painting and the series of slides focused on trying to capture that elusive quality that intrigues me so much. 18/24 I can't quite put my finger on what it is - 3 maybe it's that air of mystery about them; 5/24 they seem to live somewhere else, to be a part of an existence I am excluded from. 5 /24 They are frozen in time-or at least their beautiful shells are; 5/24 the part I could possibly have connected with is long gone. 20/3/2/22 (Yes, I spend a lot of time by myself. . .)

16/25 What is their connection with my slide project?

18/25 I'm not sure yet. 3/6/21/23 This could be one of the slides that gets filed (until next Christmas) unless I can make some sort of visual parallels to the ideas in the project; 3 the figures are perhaps just too seasonal.

Marie

Total number of Sentences 16

- 1. Stories 0**
- 2. Autobiographical responses 4**
- 3. Explicative 7**
- 4. Directions and suggestions 0**
- 5. Descriptions 5**
- 6. Referrals 4**
- 7. Admonitions, advice 0**
- 8. Support, solidarity, encouragement 0**
- 9. Mirroring 0**
- 10. Continuity 0**
- 11. Definitions 0**
- 12. Values, beliefs, wishes 1**
- 13. Appreciation, liking 1**
- 14. Noting significance, interest 2**
- 15. Noting image text relationships 0**
- 16. Questions 1**
- 17. Comments on school 0**
- 18. Complaints, doubts 3**
- 19. Dislikes 0**
- 20. Affective responses 1**
- 21. Image and compositional issues 2**
- 22. New idea/theme 3**
- 23. Repeated idea/theme 1**
- 24. Developed idea/theme 5**
- 25. Framed idea/theme 5**
- 26. Re-framed idea/theme**

ii) Text from Marie/ formal summary

This text is predominantly explicative and descriptive but woven into it are a variety of affective and reflective statements. The author draws attention to her doubts, her wishes, and her likes. She notes the significance of certain issues and she contextualizes all of this by abstruse and somewhat mysterious references to her own life. She refers to the slides in question directly and indirectly.

iv) Text from Marie/ thematic summary

She refers to a slide project and to slides of a Mexican Nativity figure. These are attractive because of their mystery. They, or their shells, are elusive. She refers to personal isolation and to a desire to capture the mysterious.

v) Text to Marie and code assignment (codes embedded in text)

February 9, 1993

Marie:

14/5/6/25 This is an interesting slide though it is of a conventional subject. 14/5/21/23 The hollowed out aspect of the figures seems to be what is intriguing. 3/24 They are there yet not there. 3/5/24 It is as if the bodies have left but the clothes, somehow retaining the bodies' form, have stayed behind and go on doing normal things.

5/24 They're like ghosts but more substantial; perhaps shells or husks would be a better word.

3/22 One can have a somewhat similar experience working with the elderly especially those with Alzheimer's or those who have suffered serious strokes. 3/5/24 Often one feels that the person has left and the body goes on functioning. 3/24 A similar phenomena can

sometimes be observed in people who are seriously disturbed.

3/14/25 Certainly we all experience absences in our mental and emotional continuum but when they are prolonged they become haunting.

5/24 These figures, though meant to be celebratory, have that haunting quality. 4/6/21/22 Perhaps the connection to your project is the area of feeling rather than the actual slide.

11/12/22 All photographs, slides etc. are about memory and, in a way, loss. 14/3/24 Some photos are particularly haunting especially when the sense of loss they embody is acute for some reason. 4/6/25 Thus your insight into these figures may be linked to your use of photographic imagery.

8 At any rate...press on. 14/10 It seems interesting and I will await further reports.

Mike Collins

Total Number of Sentences 16

Revised Integrated Codes for both student and teacher.

1. Stories
2. Autobiographical responses
3. Explicative 7
4. Directions and suggestions 2
5. Descriptions 6
6. Referrals to own or other art 3
7. Admonitions, advice 0
8. Support, solidarity, encouragement 1
9. Mirroring
10. Continuity 1

11. Definitions1
12. Values, beliefs, wishes 1
13. Appreciation, liking
14. Noting significance, interest 5
15. Noting image text relationships
16. Questions
17. Comments on school
18. Complaints, doubts
19. Dislikes
20. Affective responses
21. Image and compositional issues 2
22. New idea/theme 3
23. Repeated idea/theme 1
24. Developed idea/theme 7
25. Framed idea/theme 3
26. Re-framed idea/theme

vi) Text to Marie/formal summary

This first response to Marie focuses on explicative and descriptive comments. As well, the significance of her work or her comments is noted. There are direct references to her work. As well, there are some interpretive suggestions and some general well wishing and encouragement looking forward to the next exchange.

February 9, 1993

vii) Text to Marie/thematic summary

I mention the Mexican figures in the slide, and note that what makes them interesting is their hollowed out quality. I relate this hollowed out quality to the absent feeling that proceeds from Alzheimer's victims, stroke victims. I refer to mental absences that

become haunting, like the images in the photographs. I discuss the relationship of photography to memory and loss and suggest that the importance of the slide is not the subject matter but the feeling it evokes. (Collins, Feb. 9. 1993)

From such entries I constructed the chronological narrative. Below is an extended quotation from the narrative material that I presented to Marie. It deals with our first exchange.

3. The basic chronological narrative example

a. The Concordia site:

Partial narrative of a dialogue journal sketchbook Exchange with Marie

My interaction with Marie began on February 9, 1993. She was a student in my art education Studio course at Concordia University. She and the other students in that course were in the process of preparing artwork for inclusion in the year-end art education graduate student show. At the same time they were also on an eight-week student placement in the schools in and around Montreal as a part of their teacher training. My arrangement with these students was that during their placement they would maintain a written dialogue with me explaining their art making process and proposed product. They would illustrate these written exchanges with their sketches, slides or other visual material related to their project. Following some of the work of Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, L. (1988) and others, I was calling this exchange a dialogue-journal. However because of the added visual material I expanded the title to dialogue-journal-sketchbook (DJSB).

Marie was a part-time student so she was not on that placement but because most students were, the class did not meet and so Marie corresponded with me, as did the other participants. Meanwhile she worked part-time in a halfway house

teaching art to psychiatric outpatients.

In the first dialogue journal sketchbook entry she sent me, along with her text, a slide of Mexican figures made of papier-mâché. The slide showed a grouping of figures in a brownish tone. They seemed to be hollow. I found these images evocative, and poetic, perhaps somehow symbolic, but they also illustrated Marie's comments directly.

In her text Marie wrote about her project, which, along with the other students, she was preparing for a year-end exhibition. She referred to a slide project and to slides of a Mexican Nativity figure, one of which she had attached to her text. She said that she found these attractive because of "an elusive quality that intrigues me so much. I can't quite put my finger on what it is...they seem to live somewhere else, to be part of an existence I am excluded from. They are frozen in time-or at least their beautiful shells are" (Marie, February 9, 1993). They evoked in her a desire to capture the mysterious. She referred to a sense of personal isolation, which she seemed to feel was somehow connected to her interest in these figures.

Her text was not long, predominantly explicative and descriptive. However, I notice that woven into it were a variety of affective and reflective statements. She drew attention to her doubts, her wishes, her likes. She noted the significance of certain issues and she contextualized all of this by abstruse and somewhat mysterious references to her own life. She referred to the slides related to her project directly and indirectly. All of this indicated to me that Marie was a reflective writer and I thought that this bode well for my work with her on this project.

My response picked up on her concerns. I referred to the Mexican figures in the slide and noted that what made them interesting to me was their hollowed out quality. I related this hollowed out quality to the absent feeling that one can pick

up “working with the elderly, especially those with Alzheimer's or those who have suffered serious strokes. Often one feels that the person has left and the body goes on functioning” (Collins, February 9, 1993). I suggested that the mental absences produced by such illnesses can become haunting-like the images in the slide which Marie had sent me. I went on to discuss the relationship of photography to memory and loss and suggested that the importance of the slide of the figures might not be in the subject matter but the feeling it evoked.

In my first response to Marie, I focused, like her, on explicative and descriptive comments. As well, I pointed out what I thought was significant in her work or her comments. In doing so I made direct references to her slide and her project. I also made some interpretive suggestions. In so far as this was our first exchange, I engaged some general well wishing and encouragement. I ended by looking forward to the next exchange. (Collins, 1994)

The rest of this chronological narrative and the other chronological narratives were constructed in the same manner.

J. Pattern identification and emergent narrative

1. Introduction

At the same time that I was coding the texts and images of the participants and developing the narratives, I was continuously re-reading my own responses and the participant responses for all of the eleven students to see if any overall patterns would emerge. In a sense I was looking for an emergent narrative or plot (Ricoeur, 1988; White, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988) that would give a shape to the exchanges. I felt as if I was getting ahead of myself a bit. However, I wanted to see if I could at least determine some tentative patterns that might forecast the construction of narratives. I eventually opted for a five-point schema of student response and related teacher response. I believe that the codes were guiding my “interpretations” because they spelled out the how or the structure

of the rhetoric in our exchanges.

2. Patterns of Response

a. The five patterns of student response

- i) Self-reflective response integrating inner feelings and technical resolution of art problem.
- ii) Self-reflective response focused on solving technical problems without much reference to inner states.
- iii) Poetic response paralleling image production in text but not too much on solving art problems.
- iv) Ruminating response, chewing over a fixed idea without much indication of finding or solving new art problems.
- v) Ignoring response not discussing inner issues, making of own art and generally not acknowledging pedagogical interventions.

b. The Five Patterns in My Responses as a Teacher.

My own responses as a teacher I linked to the student categories:

- i) Supportive, explicative to Student response 2.a. i).
- ii) Explicative, technically to student response 2.a. ii).
- iii) Explicative, interpretive, descriptive \to student response 2.a. iii).
- iv) Limiting, challenging to student response 2.a. iv).
- v) Redirecting to own work 2.a. v).

I thought there was a reasonable basis for such intuitive analysis. They seemed to represent the skeletons of the narratives that I constructed following upon my coded analyses. As such they were predictive probes of those emergent narratives.

I will return to these categories in a later chapter.

K. Some conclusions foreshadowed: one clear success

At the end of constructing these narratives I seemed to have confirmed my initial opinion of where the DJSB was successful in helping to develop a mutual creative and reflective exchange between the participants and me. One participant, Marie, seemed to have been fully successful in the DJSB exchanges while the others, in some roughly ordered manner were less so. I believed that the characterizations of the DJSB that had emerged in the code assignments and analyses were confirmed. Moreover, I had enriched my understanding of how such conclusions had emerged by adding content to the exchange. I could see more clearly how the DJSB reflected ideas, interests and the personal narratives of the participants in specifics. I had a better sense of how the content of the process, or what the participants were trying to say, had affected the outcome.

At the same time I could trace my own participation more clearly in terms of the specifics of my own personal narrative and delineate how that influenced the exchanges. I could show my motives more clearly and connect them in a dynamic manner to the process of the exchange. In this exposure of content and motivation the objectification of the participants that was somehow inherent in the coding process was overcome.

As well, I now had a document to present to each participant that presented my understanding of how the DJSB had taken place and of the outcomes in terms of both form and content. It revealed my view of the varying shapes of the DJSB as time-based processes that went a certain way because of both the participants and my involvement. My participants and I were able to re-experience the DJSB exchange as temporal process symbolized by the narrative.

Still the question remained: “Were the characterizations of the DJSB exchanges as revealed in the constructed narratives, good representations of what had occurred?” To probe that, I turned to follow-up interviews with my participants.

L. The follow-up interviews

After I had completed the reconstructed narratives of my dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges I began a series of follow-up interviews with the participants. This entailed my sending the completed narratives plus a preliminary analytic section, along with copies of the images they had produced, to each of the participants. Since I was working full time the writing up of the narratives, their dispersal to the participants and the follow-up interviews took place over a two-year period. This meant that there was at least a year, and sometimes more, between the time that the dialogue journal sketchbook interchange was completed and the interview.

I taped the interview, with the permission of the participants. I listened to each tape at least three times, transcribing as I went. Each recursion meant that I was able to refine the transcription. I then wrote narrative summaries of each interview. From the narrative summaries I derived analytic notes that were directed to the issues of verisimilitude and story.

I also used the interviews to establish some sense of the students' understanding of image text relationships, the significance of a "trustworthy" context, their understanding of the utility of the DJSB process for making art and its support of creativity, the continuance of the practices of the DJSB, my own practices as a teacher of art (Clandinin, 1985; Schwab, 1970) and so forth. Essentially I was confirming, discarding and amplifying the emergent themes, established in the narrative case studies of the DJSB exchanges.

My preliminary review of the narratives had indicated that only one of the participants, Marie, had acted in a fully reflective and creative manner. The others had all revealed some problem or problems that seemed to limit them in creative and reflective terms. I hoped that the follow-up interviews, based on the narratives that I would present to the participants, might explain why this was so. I hoped to see if my telling of the story of the DJSB exchange matched the participants' understanding of what had occurred.

My intent in the initial storying (Lanzara, 1990; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1993; Carter, 1993) was to open the narrative itself up to a re-storying (Lanzara, 1993) that would bring it more in line with what the participants understood had happened. I imagined that those participants with the greatest problems in creative and reflective activity might reveal where their problems lay, or at least recontextualize them so that I could understand their process more fully.

In the following three chapters, each focused on one of the three sites, I set the initial narratives, constructed through the coding, against the interviews to highlight the participants' personal narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994) as it emerged in the interview. These interviews altered my view of the participants' engagement in the DJSB and my view of their creative and reflective processes. I consider this in Chapters Seven and Eight.

M. Emergent themes following on the interviews

Following the interviews I reviewed the material to identify some common themes that contextualized the original narratives and the re-storying for which those interviews called. I present these in Chapter Seven. Themes at the Concordia site became the model for my assessment at the other two sites, Sheridan and UTM/Sheridan. At these sites I identified similar themes but with variations.

N. Assessing the participants in terms of creative and mutual reflective thinking in art making

1. Introduction

This establishing of the narrative case studies, and the validation of them by means of a follow-up interview, enabled me to determine the emergent themes in the DJSB exchange. I wanted, as well, to focus more directly on the relative success of the DJSB in

fostering reflective creative action for each participant. To do this I reviewed characteristics of creative action and reflective thought as specified by the literature (Chapter Two). From this I derived a single model that brought together the features of creative action and reflective thinking.

2. The model

In this model:

- a. Both creative action and reflective thinking arise because of some disruption, internal or external, and both depend on problem finding and solving.
- b. Both take place in a context, which determines the situation and outcomes to some extent, as well as the material that will be handled.
- c. Successful completion of reflective thinking or creative action is dependent upon the ability to suspend closure and to string out a series of related moves.
- d. Both are dependent on the repertoire of the practitioner. At the same time the disruptions that initiate the process are rooted in the personal narrative of the practitioner.
- e. Success in creative thinking is generally or often held to be dependent on the practitioner's ability to enter into twilight states or states of reverie, where unconscious processes underlie symbol formation, and from which new symbols may emerge.
- f. While reflective thinking is usually considered as a more rational process, it too depends on analogical connections that partake of some of this inner symbol formation more usually connected to the term "creativity."
- g. Both creative action and reflective thought work outwards from inner processes to an audience. While such is not absolutely necessary, both usually imply establishing some relationship between the thought or action and a percipient, an audience or an interlocutor other than oneself. This is also the assumption underlying educational structures, in our culture, where at least question and answer are necessary and dialogue is preferred.

I then reviewed each of the narrative case studies, against the model, to arrive a

preliminary ranking of the participants in terms of their creative reflective activity during the DJSB exchanges.

3. Using the coded texts and images as a check

a. Introduction

As a check against this process I grouped my text and image codes into categories of related function, and then mapped them onto the model that I had developed to link creativity and reflective thinking.

b. Grouping the function codes for text and image

In this example of my procedure, which I used for all code categories, I linked the following text categories together, under one function heading, “Idea Presentation and Development”:

Idea presentation and development

- 14. Noting significance, interest
- 15. Noting Image text relationships
- 21. Image and compositional Issues
- 22. New ideas/themes
- 23. Repeating ideas/themes
- 24. Developing ideas/themes
- 25. Framing ideas/themes
- 26. Re-framing ideas/themes. (Collins, M. 1998)

c. Memoing to link the function codes to the model of creative reflective Action.

I wrote a short memo for each category to link them to my model of creative reflective action. For example:

Since creative or reflective acts begin with a disruption of the status quo they will lead the participants into problem solving or problem finding. Here 'noting significance' and 'image and compositional issues' and 'framing an idea/theme,' all of which fit into the 'Presentation development of idea/themes' area seem to be the locus for problem finding. Problem solving also draws on the explanatory categories as well as the presentation and development categories. The participants show their ability to focus on a problem by repeatedly returning to it, and they reveal their ability to move in a new direction by creating a series of moves that involve introducing new ideas/themes, developing idea/themes and re-framing idea/themes or even giving oneself directions. These also point to the participants' ability to suspend closure and move through various options before coming to a solution. Asking questions, either of themselves or their interlocutor could extend such activities. (Collins, 1998)

d. Memoing to analyze the creative reflective action of the participants and me

I then wrote memos based on the mapping of the code assignments for each participant and myself.

For example, from a memo on Hubert's text I wrote:

Hubert presented very few stories, which was consistent with most of the participants' participation in this category. However, he did have more autobiographical comments than the group overall; he had more comments coded for values, beliefs and wishes, and for comments on school than did the participants overall. This was also true of his expression of doubts, complaints and apologies. Hubert's life, as he was currently living it, intruded directly into the DJSB exchange with me more frequently than it did for most other

participants, and it made sense, therefore, that, in the end, he would see his project as a self-portrait. What he seemed impelled to by the inner and outer pressures emanating from his personal narrative was to develop a summary picture of his life at the juncture at which I dealt with him, or so it seemed.

Hubert's approach to these problems both in terms of his own life and in terms of making an image or symbol of that life was reflective and creative, as can be seen in his attempts to explain his work and to present and develop his ideas. In this process he both located or "found" his problems, and then sought solutions. Like most of the participants, Hubert devoted a large part of his text to explaining his ideas and his work. This was appropriate within the context of the exchange. Hubert, however, dedicated comments to describing his work or to referring to his work less frequently than the participants did overall. This suggests that in the DJSB exchange, his life story was of more significance to him than the work expressing it. His recognition of that led him away from his original political theme towards a more personal one.

Hubert was aware of which problems were important to him. He had a greater frequency of comments in this category, "noting significance, interest" more than other participants overall. Hubert's comments on installation issues did point out his awareness of those problems and how they might be solved in terms of the work he was making, in spite of his somewhat lower use of description and referral statements.

Hubert's capacity for reflection on his work is supported by his idea presentation and development. He was the equal of other participants in idea repetition, a mark of the participant's ability to stay with a theme or idea throughout the DJSB exchange. He re-framed those ideas at about twice the rate of other participants overall, indicating that he was reflecting on the context of his work at a high rate.

He did have lower rates overall of development and framing of ideas which

suggests that his original concept stayed somewhat the same even as he re-contextualized it largely in terms of his own life. He introduced new ideas at a relatively low rate. This seemed appropriate in a situation where he was supposed to be developing ideas over a period of time in a consistent manner. Hence, new ideas were not as crucial to the process. (Collins,1998)

I used such memos as a check on my assessment of how the narrative case studies revealed the creative and reflective activity of the participants in the DJSB exchange.

e. Using the interviews as a check against the assessments based on the narrative case studies

Once I had established my preliminary assessments of the participants and my relative success in the DJSB exchanges, I then reviewed the interviews with a similar purpose. Just as the interviews modified my sense of the “plot” (the sense or shape of what had happened in the exchange) so they modified my estimation of the creative reflective action in which the participants had engaged.

I report on this two-part assessment in Chapter Eight.

From all of this process I established the “facts” of the situation, interpreted them and then re-interpreted them. I summarize my conclusions from this in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Four: “I Went Back to Montreal” (Collins, 1993): Narratives and Interviews at the Concordia site

A . Introduction

At Concordia I had a small class (11) of pre-service art education students. My class was the studio class for that group and I addressed the issues of art making as I saw them applying to artist-teachers. In the second semester the students were scheduled to go on a field placement in Montreal schools. In order to help them maintain their art making and to prepare works for a year-end show I decided to engage them in an exchange around their work. What started out as a pragmatic idea took on a clearer shape when I decided, as a pilot project, to set up the exchange in a formal manner following on the practices of “dialogue journalers.” I elaborated that activity to include sketching of potential ideas for the work required at the end of the semester.

Each week the students were required to submit their ideas as they developed towards their final project. They were to do sketches and to write about their process in a reflective manner. My job was to respond to them each week, and to enter into a mutual creative reflective process focused on their art making. All of the students took part in the DJSB exercise. Ten volunteered to be considered for the research project, and, as described in the previous chapter, I eventually chose three of them as a basis for my assessment of the relative success or failure of the DJSB procedure.

What follows are the interpretive narrative case studies that I presented to the participants at each site, followed by the “corroborating” interviews. In some cases I have provided contextual comments. Here, as for the participants, I present copies of the visuals which they had submitted to me as part of the DJSB exchanges and from which I had, in part, constructed the narratives.

B. “Hubert”: prologue

Hubert’s work was strongly rooted in his experience as a citizen of Québec. Initially I felt that this showed up in his concerns about language. He spoke both French and English but he had some self-recognized problems writing both because of the somewhat split way in which he had been taught language. I didn’t find his problems insuperable but sometimes there were grammatical constructions in his texts that were not quite what I would have expected from a native English speaker. Previously I had taught English at the same time that I had pursued my art making, so this issue was of more than passing interest to me. However, it did not become a direct focus in our exchange.

Certainly Hubert felt the language issue keenly and it was saturated with his concerns for his position within his culture both from a personal point of view and from a political one. There had been a strong separatist movement within Québec, certainly since the 1960s, and this had been part of Hubert’s experience, both in growing up and in his education. The issues had become more acute for him when he decided to be an artist and art teacher and left his previous university program in commerce. His decision to do so, which seemed to me to be linked to his desire to find a way to express his feelings about his cultural dilemma, was not well received, I gathered from what he said, by either his family or his friends. Yet he had made that decision. It marked a real turning point in his life and it pointed to the strong emotional commitment he had made to dealing with the cultural contradictions in which he had been raised and was living.

In 1993, Québec was experiencing a real fervor of separatism focused on a referendum on their position in the Canadian Federalist system. Hubert was feeling this as an issue of choice and he began to develop an installation work, based on a voting booth that would express the situation both personally and politically. Immediately, it was clear, stories, both personal and cultural informed Hubert’s work in complex and multi-layered ways. Even so, while Hubert’s work was focused on this “storied” situation, much of our dialogue seemed to skirt such issues. We fell into a kind of pattern early on, which set the tone and direction of what we were to accomplish together. In a way, it seemed to me that

we acted out the dilemma of English and French Canada, both dealing with a set of problems from different viewpoints.

Next is the constructed text, which, along with the images, I presented to Hubert.

C. The Narrative of the DJSB exchange with Hubert: a grand vision

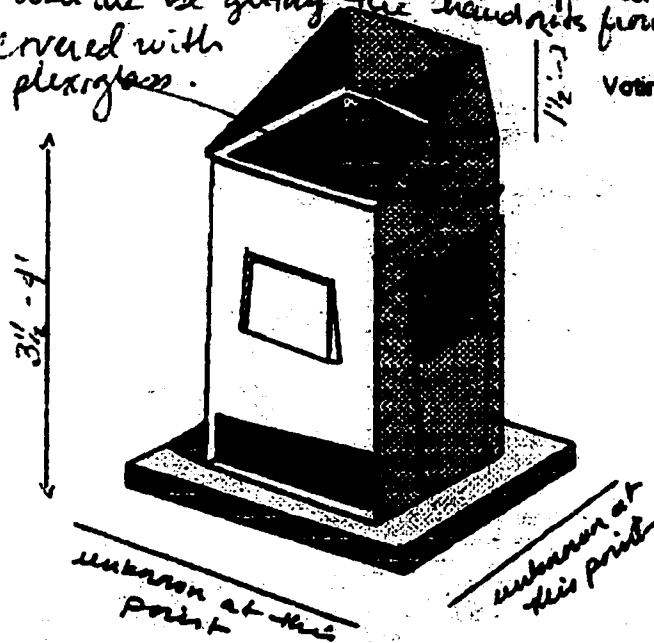
In his first entry, accompanying his sketch of the installation (Hubert One: Voting Booth), Hubert spoke directly about “the tension involved in making decisions such as [in a] cultural or personal direction” (February 9, 1995). However he had evolved his idea (which he had already talked about the previous semester) so that it focused “a little less on the issue of the referendum and more of the issue of cultural choices” (February 9, 1995). There was a move away from the strictly political to the artistic. In way Hubert was beginning to make his expression around the issue more personal.

My response to this was tempered with liberal ideology. As I saw it then, I supported his shift because it took some of the pressure off Hubert. I think here, however, I was concerned about dealing with a strictly nationalist or federalist statement in his art. The shift in Hubert’s approach would make his “piece more applicable to the wider idea of choice in a ‘democratic’ society” (February 9, 1995). This was something with which I felt more comfortable. That fact was a problem and one that I did not address. Certainly Hubert’s struggle, from his point of view, was how to deal with his experiences as a “Québécois.” I was somewhat distanced from those experiences because of my background growing up in Ontario. This, coupled with my lack of comfort with the controversy surrounding the issue, meant that part of the reflective process that perhaps the dialogue journal should have addressed was dropped. Hubert’s essential expressive problem did not come to the fore in my consciousness.

Michael, what happened to the gallery breakdown like the Visual Arts center I presented in class? 1834-40. will we be getting the handouts from these other galleries. covered with plexiglass.

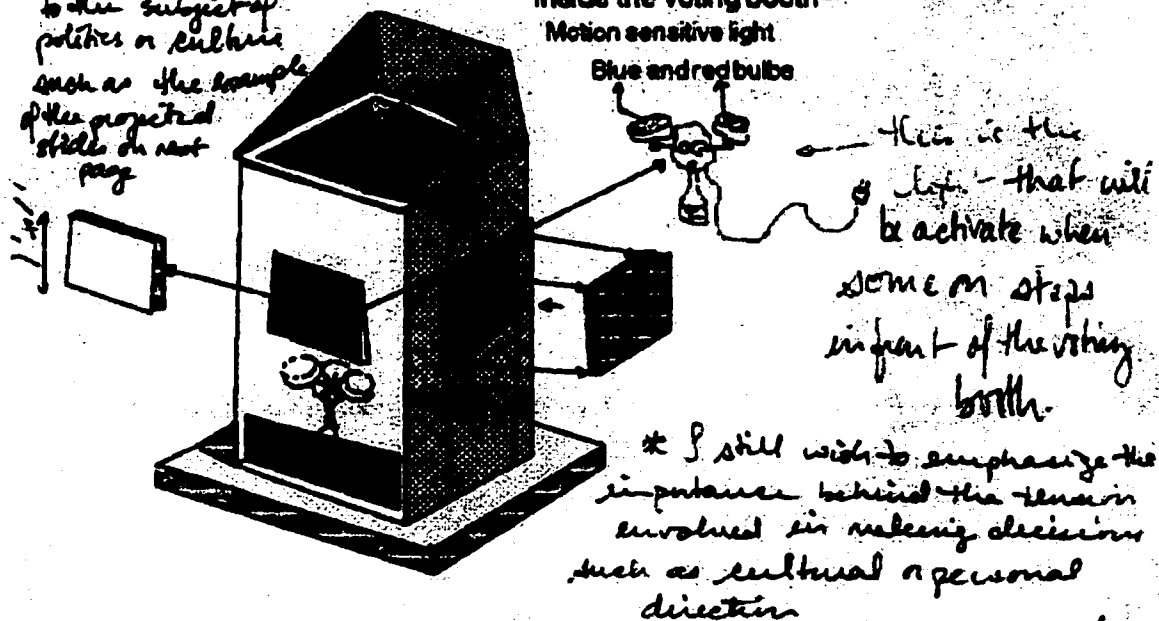
Voting booth preliminary sketch

Feb 9/93



The idea is that the viewer will enter the environment and be drawn to see what is behind the voting booth.

* Due to access to new software in my internship placement I may try to do some computer images with the mouse that would be relevant to the subject of politics or culture such as the example of the projected slide on next page



* I still wish to emphasize the importance behind the tension involved in making decisions such as cultural or personal direction

Hubert One: Voting Booth

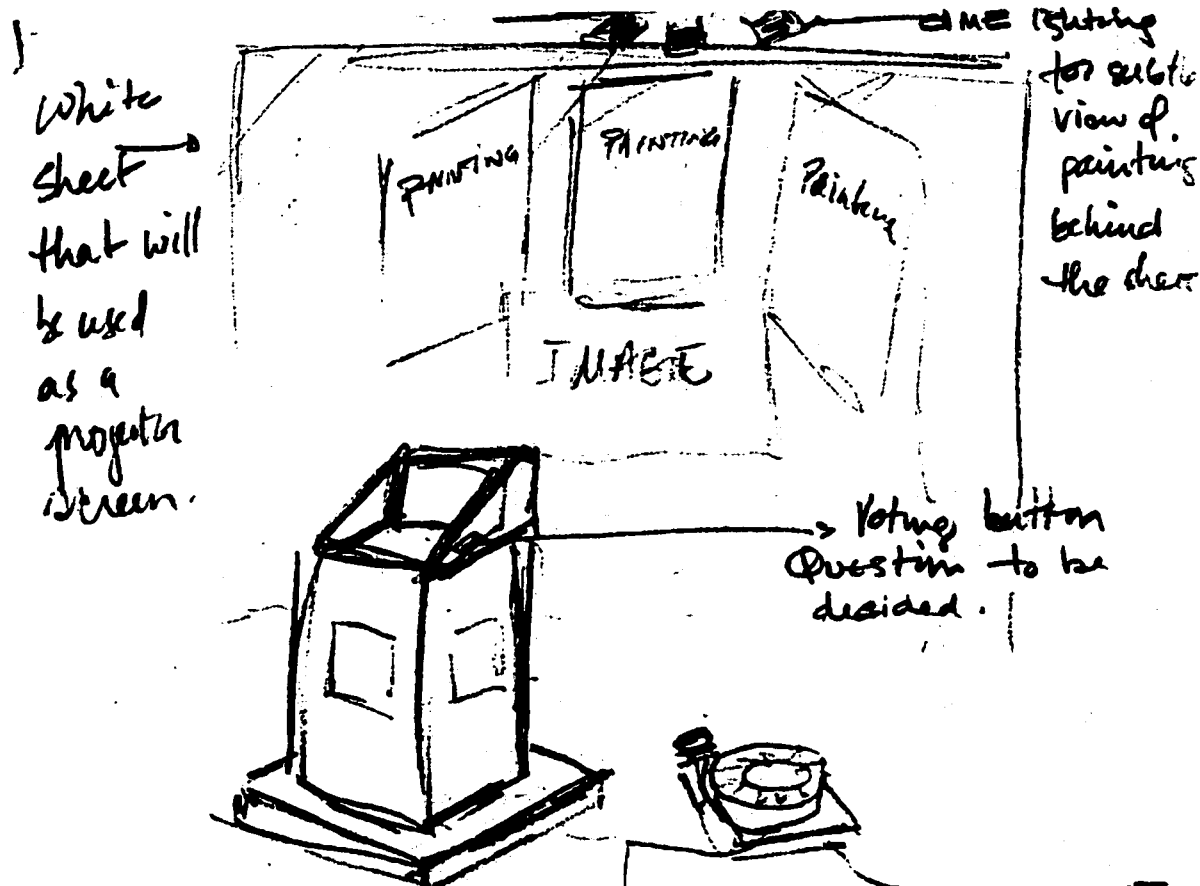
At the same time I was concerned that Hubert keep his installation relatively simple. I wrote: "For the final presentation this year you might want to work on the idea that simple is beautiful. Using just the booth plus one painting would make the piece more manageable" (Collins, February 9, 1993). Here I was apparently applying a principle, a discipline, (Schon, 1983) hoping that would re-organize Hubert's project and solve his "problem." I had two motives for that. One was to make sure he would be able to accomplish it in the time he had. I knew that he would find his placement very time consuming, partly because it would be a lot of work and partly because I sensed that he would throw himself into it. I wanted to be sure that there would be time for the art that had to be done. From my viewpoint this project would affect his final assessment, which up to this point was very good. I wanted him to maintain that high level of achievement.

I was also concerned about the gallery space. If Hubert's project expanded too much there could be conflicts over the space with other participants. Here my own autobiography was playing a role, although I did not bring this forward directly to Hubert. I have been a member of four different artist-run cooperative galleries. Whenever the artist-members in those instances had to put on group shows there was always some jockeying for space, for the "best" space and so forth. I suspected that such could be the case in this upcoming year-end exhibit that would involve both the Diploma students in my class, and the Graduate Students in Art Education. As it turned out there was just such a conflict at the time of the show installation. However, it did not involve Hubert but one of the graduate students and another student from my class. This possibility of conflict over space as well as the idea that I had to make sure that Hubert completed the work took on a life of its own. My own experience of how artists worked together and my conception of my responsibility as teacher were at work here. In the exchange that followed I saw these issues as a large part of the "problem" with which Hubert was presenting me. Out of these concerns, then, I enunciated the principle of "simplicity" and to some extent that was helpful. The sequence of moves that Hubert made which suspended closure allowed him to redefine his project. My redefinition of the "problem" meant that I became less focused on the content and form of the artwork itself.

Of course this was not completely the case. In this first response I made some suggestions, accompanied with diagrams, as to how he might incorporate slide projectors into the work. This I thought was a way of enabling him to deal efficiently with the wide range of material that was available on the cultural situation in Québec. The shape of the voting booth and its name also influenced me and I immediately thought of a “projection” booth, both in a film sense and in terms of psychology.

In the exchanges at Concordia the students only received my comments after they had already completed entry #two of their dialogue journal sketchbook. Hubert, however, fell ill in the second week of the placement and did not attend the class where the exchange of materials normally took place. As a result I got his second and third week entries together in the third week and my comments were a response to both of these.

In his second entry Hubert responded directly to my admonition to “keep it simple” (Collins, February 9, 1993). He said that, “[the] suggestion made to simplify the installation is well received and much appreciated” (February 16, 1993). In this entry he presented a sketch showing his installation idea (Hubert Two: Installation Idea). As I looked it over I was struck by how clearly he had worked out his idea but I was uncertain how he planned to make it simpler. This, I think (as I noted earlier) was an issue for both him and me, one around which we circled. I wanted him to have room to develop his ideas but I wanted them to be compatible with a group setting. Hubert seemed to be struggling with a plethora of material, both inner and outer, and at this point it seemed unclear to him, as it was to me, what was the essential issue. In his note and in his diagram Hubert outlined how he could incorporate slides into his installation. The voting booth could be a projection booth for the carousel. At the same time he planned to put a scrim in front of his paintings and to show the slides on the scrim. While I had suggested something like this I began to feel that it unnecessarily complicated matters. In essence, it seemed to me, that, while Hubert was accepting the principle of “simplicity”, he was making his project more complex; I did not, however, directly critique his approach.



Michael, Please note that I am ^{not} 3/93 interested in using some of the computer imagery that I have been working with here at the High school. Also I must apologize for any spelling on the previous pages... I am trying to learn how to use the Page Maker 4.0 Aldus.

LAST WEEK I HAD A BAD COOL AND DID NOT ATTEND class... So last week's slides ~~it~~ included in this week's presentation.

Connection to the slide projector that will change images for each vote.

Images to be decided

Feb 16/93

Hubert Two: Installation Idea

Hubert's sketches and comments for week three were also included with the second entry. These were further explorations of the use of computer programs for creating imagery (Hubert three: voting booth; Hubert four: Mac ideas). He used them to create his pages that integrated images and text. He seemed to want to find a way to use the computer more extensively in his project. He wrote: "[I] am quite interested in the possibilities that are offered by the world of computer art" (March 3, 1993).

I again saw this as a possible shift away from the main point, and from my experience of learning how to use computer graphics programs, a time-consuming one. Again, I did not bring forward any stories about my own explorations of such computer applications. Primarily I had a sense of keeping Hubert on track so I suggested how he might go about modifying his installation in line with his use of the computer. I tried to keep the focus on the installation, e.g. "Use PageMaker to make up ballots that could be available in an envelope or some sort of container on the side or front of your booth. Then the viewer can get more interactive" (March 3, 1993).

Hubert had access to these programs because of his in-service placement for the art education program in which he was enrolled. Out of his texts and images something of the story of that placement, along with the story of his computer explorations, was beginning to emerge. While the placement gave him certain advantages he was also finding the workload quite heavy. This, which I also saw as a factor working against his being able to execute his project, may have led him to accept my suggestions about "keeping it simple." My responses to his dilemma were to suggest ways of limiting the project to a process report. "If you can't get your ballot box built you could always produce a text [and] image report of your project on slides and simply project it on to the wall" (March 3, 1995). I was continuing to see Hubert's project as needing a strategic and tactical response under the rule of "simplicity" to issues of focus, size, complexity and scheduling. At this juncture Hubert's own stories (about the placement, about his life as an artist-art teacher) were beginning to emerge. He seemed to me to be complicating things, yet he was beginning to be more focused on his own story than on the larger political issues that he had first considered. This proved to be an important move.

Feb 16/93

THE VOTING BOOTH

SIMPLICITY IS REALLY THE SIMPLEST WAY
TO TRANSMIT ONES IDEAS.

THE SUGGESTION MADE TO

S I M P L I F Y T H E

INSTALLATION IS A

WELL RECEIVED AND

MUCH APPRECIATED.

THIS PROPOSAL ACTS

LIKE A DECONGESTENT

D E S P E R A T L Y

NEEDED DURING

THESE LONG

WINTER MONTHS. IN

RETROSPECT I FEEL I WAS REALLY

CLOUDING THE ISSUE BY HAVING ALL

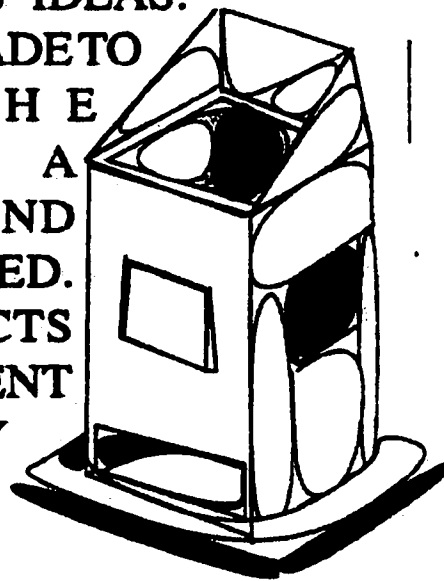
THESE ELEMENTS WORKING AT THE SAME

TIME. ALTHOUGH THE APPROACH IS STILL

INTERESTING I FEEL THAT I CAN GET MY

MESSAGE ACROSS MORE EFFECTIVELY

WITH LESS NOISE.





Hubert Four: Mac Ideas

At the same time, I was beginning to see his process within a particular framework conditioned by my own experience of other artists and students.

Hubert's next entry consisted of a commentary on slides of the three paintings that he hoped to place in his installation (not shown). These represented in overall tone and content the cultural conflict that he felt within Québec and within himself. He referred to "political bickering that divides us" (Hubert, March 10, 1993), and to the delicate balance between the French and English halves of which he was constituted. Of the English half he said little, but he spoke of the French side as passionate but constrained by a history of religious control and educational deficiency. There seemed to me to be personal stories here (I thought of his struggles with the written languages) but Hubert did not bring them forward. Even so, it was clear that he was struggling in his art to express his sense of a personal location in the French/English milieu of Québec.

Much of his commentary was descriptive and for the most part my response was supportive. I did not refer directly to any problems that I thought Hubert needed help with. I did, however, reinforce his shift away from a strictly and specifically political approach to his piece. I was still trying to emphasize broader, more universal values in art. I did respond to one somewhat mysterious reference Hubert made to the colors of his paintings as being somehow symbolic of a deeper issue. I suggested that he refer to Luscher's text, The Luscher Color Test (Luscher, 1969). While this issue did not reoccur in later entries, and remained mysterious in a direct sense, it also seems now to mark a further shift in Hubert's thoughts towards expressing his solution to his personal cultural problem. In my response I did not touch on the stories or histories that clearly lay behind the symbolic approach that Hubert was taking to his "cultural" choice. Hubert had only referred to these and as well, had not brought them forward.

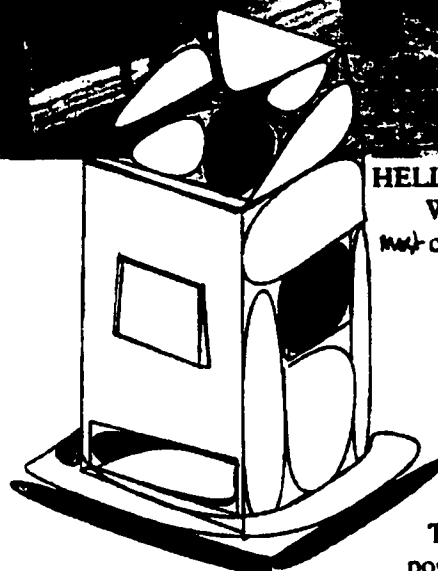
In the next entry Hubert continued with his idea of placing paintings in the installation. He included ten slides. These were from a series of paintings that he did about an area of Montreal where he had lived, St. Henri. He talked about somehow working them into the installation (Hubert Five: Mac Idea 2) so that it would become more a kind of

representation of his own self-questioning about his culture rather than a call for others to take up a cause or at least to make a choice. In this sense the piece would become a self-portrait, autobiographical, representing a period in Hubert's life, a period that seemed to sum up, for him, some of the issues that he was trying to express.

This specific shift to an art piece that was a self-portrait, at least in intention, was an important one. However it seemed linked more to Hubert's reflections on his work than on any specific suggestions that I had made. In fact, in my response I made no reference to the self-portrait idea at all. What struck me at the time was Hubert's wish to introduce ten more paintings into the work. Even though he did say that the voting booth idea was getting overly complicated, this strategic shift did not seem to me to be in line with the principle of simplicity. Rather it suggested greater complexity and a need for even more space in the gallery.

Hubert did speak of the increasing pressure he was feeling in his placement and of the struggle he saw between the time requirements in being a teacher and an artist. I took that as an opportunity to suggest again a simpler approach to his installation. Again I proposed that he consider a process report and use slides to show how his ideas had developed. Hubert had referred to this in his comments as a possibility though he did not seem very taken with the idea.

I was intent on stressing boundaries here, and in my desire to emphasize simplicity, I picked up on something in the computer processed image that he had sent me: the image of a table on which there seemed to be a video-deck and a TV. I suggested that he could incorporate a table into his work. It could be used to display items that he wanted to show which could reflect both his process and his self-portrait concerns. The voting booth, which I saw as a construction problem given the time and placement pressures, could drop out of the piece.



HELLO ONCE AGAIN!

We are now two and a half weeks away from the end of the ~~my~~ challenging stage of the pre-certification. I have become very aware of the difficulties of the teacher/artists conflict. After living this experience and hopefully continuing in the future through paid employment, I feel I have entered a new world of inspiration and contemplation. Just this week I spoke to a teacher, from another school, about the dual life of the teach-artist and was very interested to chat about this demanding yet fulfilling duality of passion and conviction.

The voting booth is an ever changing element that expresses possibly too many things at once and my job will be to focus my imagery down to a couple of ideas but clearly. As I had mentioned previously I am moving away from the idea of the strictly political response to the vote and am more interested in looking at the cultural decisions that we are faced with.

At the beginning of the year I was, (and am still), interested in looking at the area that I am living in. ST-Henri. I feel that the viewing of some of these images either through photography, painting collage, computer images would be an accurate look at elements of my culture and what adds to my personal make up. These images alternating with the images of decisions and questioning would place the viewer into my space of questioning on my culture. I feel that approaching this subject from a self-portrait angle is one that does not impose this self examination on others. However, it can lead some people to question themselves, if they feel the need, by following the questioning of the artist and taking it on a personal level. My challenge will be to find the right images that will get my questioning accross in the clearest possible fashion.

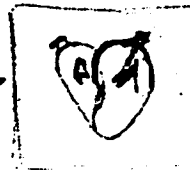
Hubert Five: Mac Idea 2

In retrospect this suggestion seems to me to be somewhat off the wall. Even so, in the computer drawing there were images of Hubert's paintings beside the table, which, at the time, may have suggested to me his previous installation sketches. Hubert, however, had not mentioned the table nor had he really referred to this computer drawing in his written text. Looking back now it seems that I was clutching at straws here, partly out of my wish to make the completion of his project possible and partly out of my anxiety about whether or not it would fit into the show along with the other works. What I was missing was that Hubert, at another level, was simplifying his original concept of the broad political statement and focusing on his own life.

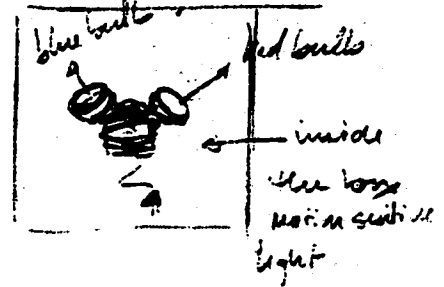
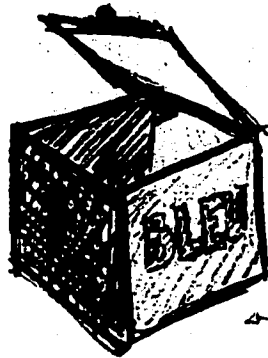
In his next entry Hubert did not refer to my comments about the table but he did present a substantial shift in his plans that seemed, in part, to pick up on what I had said about using the table. Perhaps more importantly it also seemed to reflect his own desire to make his piece more autobiographical. What he did was eliminate the voting booth from the installation. In its place he suggested a "cultural box" that would, via images on its sides, deal with the issues that Hubert considered important within his own life history as a "Québécois" (Hubert Six: Cultural Box). Hubert included an installation sketch of his piece and the box was sitting on a small table (Hubert Seven: Installation View 2).

In one move Hubert had solved a series of problems both for himself and for me. The box was simpler and easier to make than the voting booth. It would likely get built in the time Hubert had left, something about which both of us seemed concerned. It would also make it possible for Hubert to incorporate more images into his piece without having to hang more paintings, since each side of the box would hold an image. Moreover it allowed Hubert to re-emphasize the autobiographical nature of his piece. Hubert was still thinking of incorporating slides in a rather complex way. I suggested how that could be done in a way that would retain the general configuration of his installation yet be less complex.

problem with heat of
bulbs possibly melting
the acetate. What
to do?



color
acetate of a heart
that will also be
on the inside of
the



* - Also interested in possibly collaging
images that represent the idea of
cultural, personal and political identity

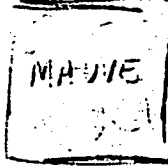
kid sailing
with the wind
bleu - representing
the gusts of the
the Canadian
the rational right side
with many of the
representing the
in theme of the
with many of the
with many of the
with many of the



mauve sailing with the
to
of the box
letter B to represent
me.



dollar sign representing the economic
issues that place us in most decisions
including cultural and political

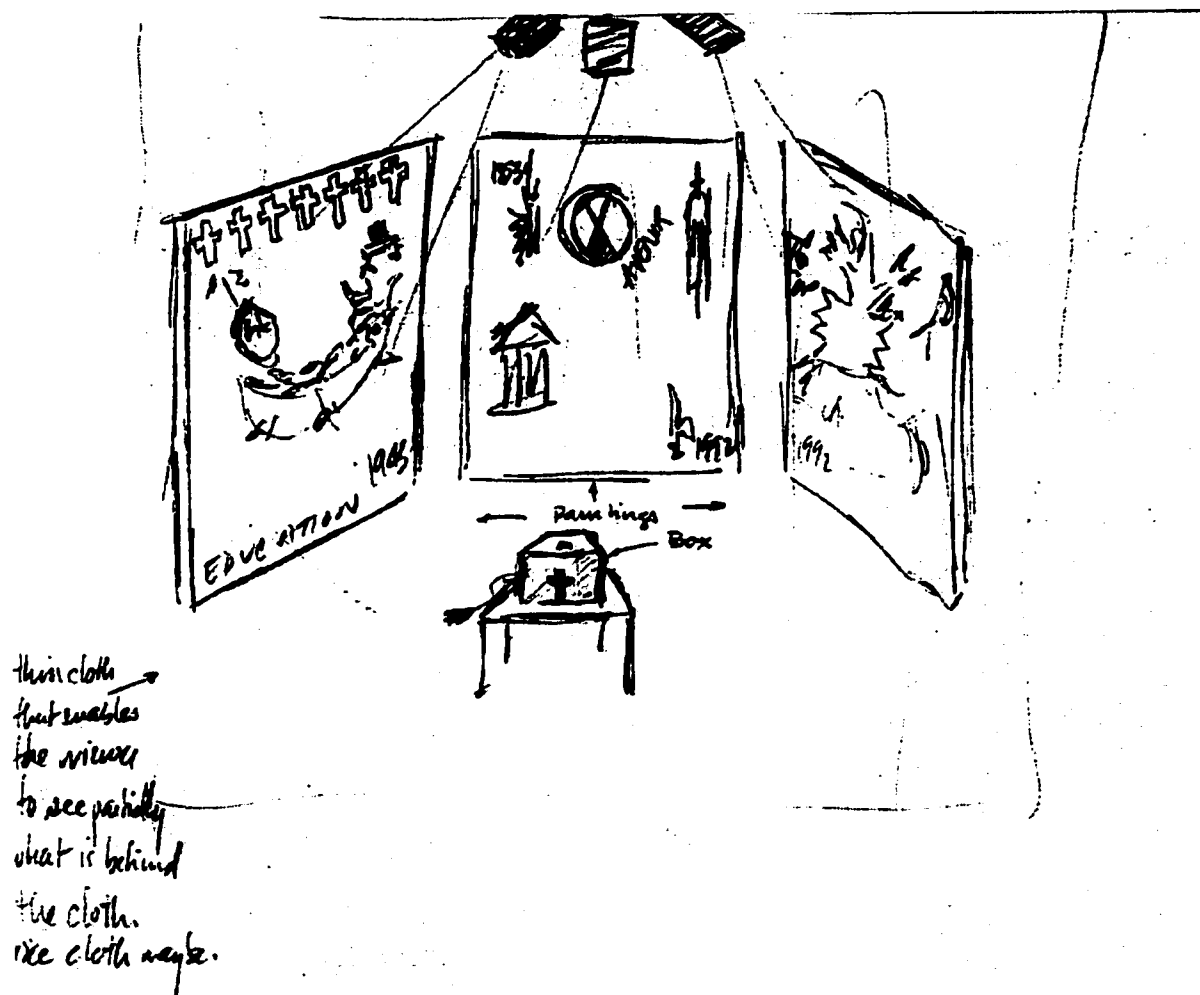


Red sailing on left
side to show the common
within the two sides as well
as creative left side



bottom of box or a house
representing the base or
front of box
the two worlds

Hubert Six Cultural Box



To represent the ever changing and ever remaining the same influences in all of these sectors

Continuous slide changes of images of the cultural, personal and political nature.

Hubert Seven: Installation View 2

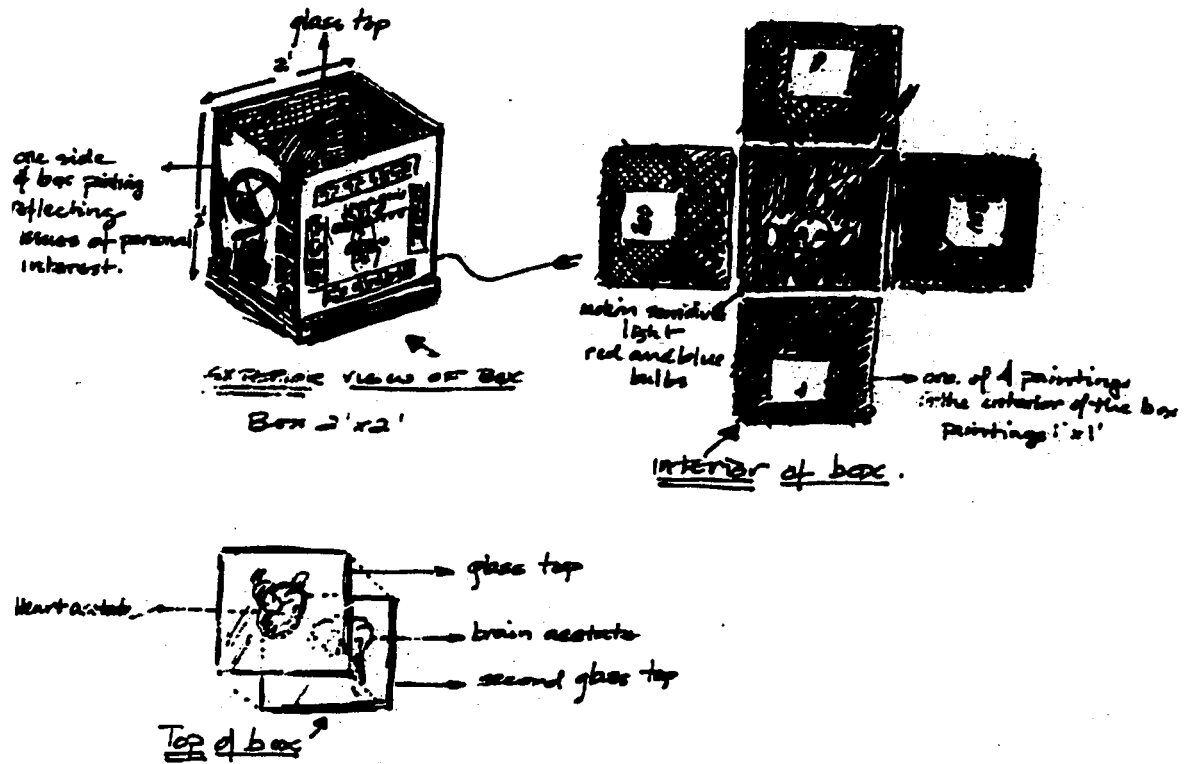
On the whole, I felt relieved since I now believed that it would be possible for Hubert to finish his proposed work. While it was unclear as to whether my comments on using a table had been directly instrumental in this shift, it did seem to be part of the complex series of moves and negotiations that Hubert and I had been involved in about simplicity. What became apparent only later was that Hubert simplified the project on both the levels of form and intention. At the time I missed out on some of that latter transformation.

So complete did Hubert's solution seem that his next entry simply confirmed that this was what he was going to do and that, except for his final essay and my response to it, was the end of our dialogue.

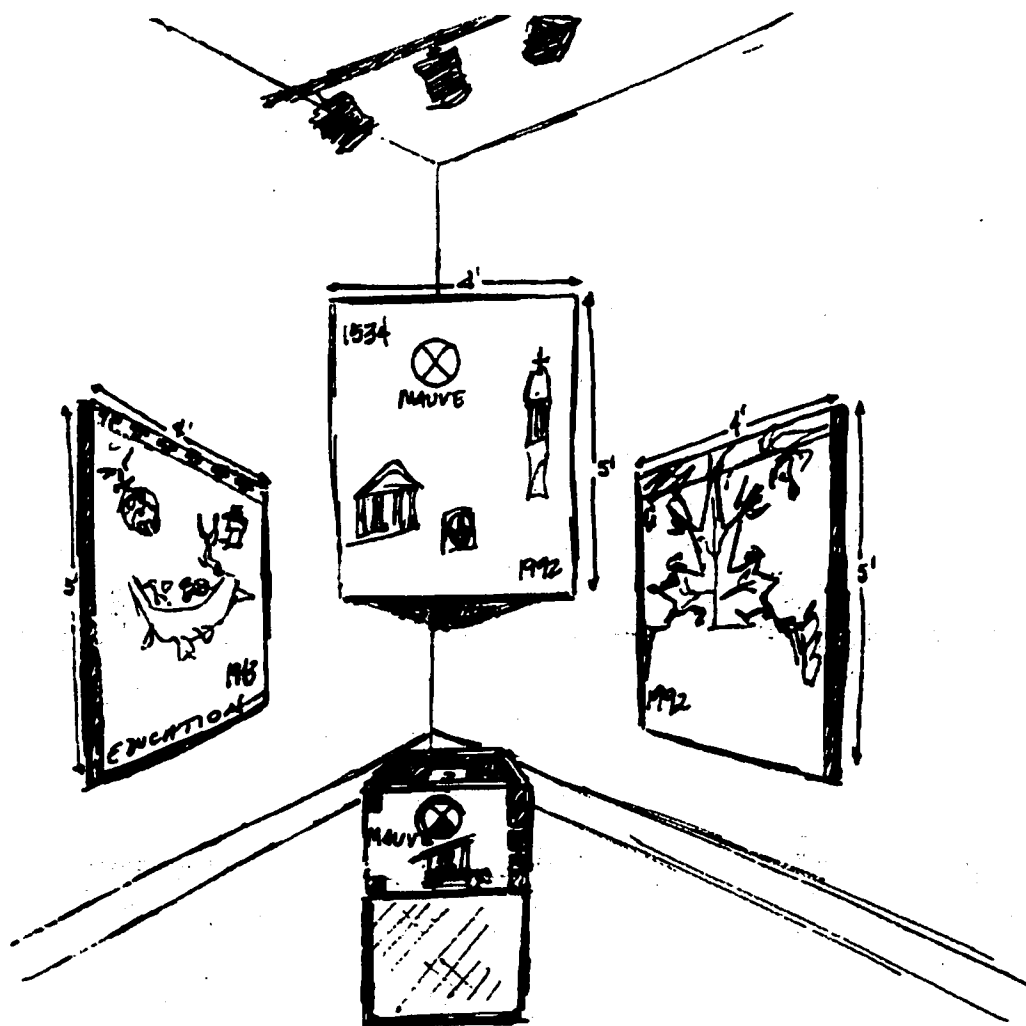
The final summary essay was of particular interest to me because I had asked Hubert, as I did of the other participants, for a summary of his process and some comments on whether or not our dialogue had helped him in his work. As well, I was looking forward to seeing Hubert's completed work.

In that completed piece he had dropped out the idea of the slide projection and had his cultural box arrayed on a table in front of his three paintings (Hubert Eight: Final Sketch, Cultural Box; Hubert Nine: Installation View Three). As I saw it, simplicity had won out. In his commentary Hubert ascribed that to the pressure of time and to the passage of time. Time was the force that had led him to a simpler solution. To be sure, he did credit our dialogue with having also pushed him towards a simpler solution. Exactly how this had happened he did not detail. Which of my comments, or when they came, did not seem to be immediately the issue. That we had engaged in a dialogue seemed important however, since Hubert expressed the desire for the possibility of such a dialogue to continue as a support for future creative work.

Final Presentation of the "Cultural Box"



Hubert Eight: Final Sketch Cultural Box



Final Presentation of the Installation "Culture Mauve"

Hubert Nine: Installation View Three (Final)

I was glad that he had found the dialogue journal sketchbook process useful, but I also felt a bit unsure as to how I had helped him in specific ways. I did think that having some sense of a boundary, which I had stressed, had helped. I had provided him with some simple ideas about the construction of his “cultural box” and I had suggested that he use a table to display his work on, which in the end he did. However, I had also been the one to suggest the slide projection, a feature that Hubert considered but in the end dropped out. The major shift that had taken place in Hubert’s own reflections on his work had been from the issue of political choice to a more personal self-portrait of Hubert’s own political and cultural dilemmas. While I had supported this I had never really gotten into a deeper discussion about what such a shift meant and how it might be accomplished. Certainly it was this conceptual shift on Hubert’s part that led, I believe, to his idea of the “cultural box” and to the “Death of the Voting Booth.” I had missed some of the significance of that shift in my own concerns about time and space. I must point out that in these final comments Hubert, himself, did not indicate that he saw his shift to a “self-portrait” as the key to a simpler, leaner formal solution for his installation. I only realized how that shift had worked in retrospect.

In his final essay Hubert also talked about the pressures of trying to be a teacher and an artist. He carried away from his placement a sense that there would not be enough time to do everything that he might want to do. He seemed to have some realization that he could keep on making art but that he would have to make some concessions and develop some new approaches. In my response to him I emphasized the need for a strategy in art making and encouraged him to keep on trying to make the situation work. I probably could have used this as an opportunity to re-state the principle of simplicity as it might be applied both to teaching and to art making but I missed out on that at the time.

What I did find encouraging was Hubert’s affirmation that he had begun to see how art-product could be subsumed under art-process. He seemed to feel that this would help him deal with the future contradictions in his role as artist-art teacher and perhaps with similar struggles in his own students.

On the whole I found our exchange, both as it occurred and in retrospect, a somewhat frustrating one. This stemmed partly from the fact that Hubert came into the project with a well-conceived idea and, in its overall configuration, as artifact, it did not change very much. He did make a significant change in the conceptualization of his problem, but it was one, as I have said, that I largely seemed to miss, so caught up was I in the logistics of constructing such an ambitious piece, and in wondering how it would fit into the gallery space along with the art of twenty or so other students. However, he did not make explicit to himself how his shift to a self-portrait was a key move in resolving several of the problems in his work. He ascribed those solutions (which I believe were a function of our exchange, awkward though it often was) to time alone. Often during our exchange, and even looking back, I did not get the sense that we were talking together so much as circling around some of the same issues of space and time, how to get the piece done and how to get it into the gallery appropriately. The solution to those problems started to emerge when Hubert decided to make the piece a “self-portrait,” when he re-conceptualized the piece. If either of us had been able to make these processes more explicit in our comments I would have found the process more satisfying. Of course the successful end product made up for some of that loss.

In the story of “Hubert” the exchange had a crisis and a resolution based less on a re-direction by myself, than on Hubert’s own ability to reflect on what he was trying to communicate. At the same time, the framework in which this took place, the constraints of time and space, became concerns to both Hubert and me. What appeared to me to be resistance on Hubert’s side, I found frustrating. Even so, my insistence on simplicity, and the coincidental pressures in Hubert’s life, seemed to have helped him to find, at least in part, a simpler approach to his final work. Thus we worked within the limits of the teacher-student relationship

However, it was Hubert’s own re-conceptualization of the piece as a “self-portrait” that led to the real simplification embodied in the “cultural box.” This move only became clear to me through the narrative construction of this DJSB exchange. My anxieties about the separatist issue played a role in my “resistance” here.

D. Hubert's interview

I saw Hubert about 18 months after the DJSB exchange had been completed. He was working as a teacher in a Francophone School with a large Haitian population. He had married and was now the father of a son. I interviewed him in the seminar room of the Art Education Program at Concordia University. He exuded energy and confidence.

In the interview Hubert returned to some of the themes that had led him to do his installation piece, for example, the politics of Québec. He also dealt with the issue of control that, I had noted, seemed to limit his approach to his art making. Moreover, he talked about his grandiose visions which had made me feel that I had to contain him in his project, both so that he could complete it, and so that he wouldn't take over the Gallery in the year end show. All of these issues were deeply rooted in his personal narrative, and perhaps over-determined by what seemed to be his own lack of understanding of how some of them seemed to be affecting him.

Initially he confirmed the story that I had written: "It seemed pretty much what happened," but then he went on to say: "If I were to tell the story it would probably be a little different." Certainly when we had finished our discussion I had a different perspective on Hubert's creative and reflective process as well.

Hubert's own life, as he saw it, was a dramatization of the English and French tensions in Canada. His father was the immediate cause of Hubert's dilemma "because of the way he had raised me." Hubert's father was a Francophone businessman who kept getting sent, with his family, to English-speaking B.C. and Ontario. He had taught Hubert that he should be a part of English culture, but that he should never neglect his French culture. This was, according to Hubert, the source of his desire to somehow integrate the two. He believed that he had finally done it in his "ultimate work of art, his son" who had been born after the DJSB and after Hubert's graduation from Concordia. He had married a Francophone girl and he said: "My son will be raised a Francophone . . . He will be

French, he won't feel like a traitor for being French." With his son's birth Hubert had given up the small room he had as a studio to be his son's bedroom. He was doing less art at this juncture. He had not kept up a regular sketchbook practice though he did use sketches in his work.

Hubert noted that his father had taught him "never to discuss politics and religion at the table." Along with this Hubert noted that if I had attacked him (on his project idea) he would have changed his project. He also said something similar about his classmates, that if they had attacked him about his work in the Gallery he would have backed down. This suggested to me that Hubert was somehow deeply ambiguous about his projects, about himself and his very being in the world.

Hubert's feelings about his culture were laden with his feelings about his father and about his own paternal role. This seemed to me to go beyond linguistic nationalism and helped me to understand why Hubert had shifted his project away from a political statement towards a self-portrait.

As well, Hubert linked his wish for control (initially at least) to his father. He told me that his father was a businessman and that he himself had spent two years as a part-time student in "commerce before switching to art education." Consequently for Hubert "planning was a really big thing." Hubert also spoke about a student show that he had to put on at the school where he now taught. He had wanted it to be "didactic" and controlled to express the best of his curriculum. Not just any student would be allowed to display his or her work.

Some sense of the other side of Hubert's wish for control came up in our discussion of the issue of time and timing in his work. He found that having to produce art by a certain time acted like a discipline for him. He said: "[I] would get a show in a restaurant. I would have to have this work done by such and such a date. That was how I would push myself to do it," and: "Part of me needs the pressure." He would be in the control of time or circumstances then. As well, he was concerned about the timing of his art themes. He

felt that he was always somewhat off. “I would say that the timing . . . there’s the problem for me.” He spoke about a cousin who was an artist and whose themes were always “*au courant*” while Hubert’s were always a bit out of sync with current issues, and so unsuccessful. He couldn’t control time, or predict what was going to be important in the future, like his cousin could.

This theme of control came up as well in another area: Hubert’s grand visions and his desire to be an artist with “impact.” Both of these themes were linked to Hubert’s sense of himself as “gifted.” He had gotten this from his stepmother who had told Hubert, as an adult, that he was “gifted” because as a child “he took things on a grandiose scale.” In relation to this he mentioned that he had always wanted “a grand and terrible thing . . . to be ‘Jesus’.” This grandiosity showed up in his desire to do a large and significant project for the student show. As he put it I, as the teacher “had to earn my salary to keep [Hubert] from taking the whole gallery.” This grandiosity seemed to me to owe something to a compensatory inflation. Hubert pointed out that: “I was always afraid that someone was going to turn around and say ‘you’re such a fake!’.” While Hubert related this to his recent move to art from a non-art background, he also said something that seemed to point to deeper issues.

He told me that his real mother had died when he was just three years old. When I heard that I felt that his grandiosity was somehow linked to that event in his life, and that it echoed through his whole approach to his art making, indeed perhaps to the very way he saw himself as somewhat unable to stand up for himself in a direct manner. He did not however pay much attention to this issue but simply mentioned it in passing.

At the same time his “giftedness” and his desire for control over any possible disappointment or failure seemed to me to owe something to this loss. He pointed out to me that he was always getting into trouble as a child because he “had difficulty in doing what he was asked to do” by the teacher. “I was always running ahead . . . doing my own thing. When I first came to this course [at Concordia] within five minutes I had gone to the end of my project and back. That was a problem in all of my courses . . . the teacher

would start and I'd go off . . . the teacher would still be explaining ...I'd be so far ahead that I'd miss what I was supposed to be doing."

And, in relation to a question about problem finding and solving in the project, Hubert said: "The idea of there being a problem, of you having to help me would be like a weakness . . . I thought I had to be in control," and: "Even today . . . I feel it as a weakness to look for outside help in my teaching." This seemed to me to be connected, in some manner, to his early loss of his mother as well. After all of these stories, it made sense that Hubert would say "I would have a difficult time imagining how you would make art without there being a story . . . to be able to produce things you need stories."

This showed me a great deal that I had not seen in the original exchange. I had felt Hubert's grand ambitions as a threat to both his ability to finish the project and to the opportunities of the other students to show their work. I had also perceived his desire to remain in control as a sign that he was simply not willing to listen to me. After the interview this view seemed to me to be ungrounded as I considered Hubert's life. As well, and even during the course of the interview I felt that I had a much deeper sense of the inner conflicts that Hubert, as a result of his personal history, had to struggle with in order to make art. These conflicts, arising in his family and in his culture seemed to be an ongoing source of anxiety for him.

Perhaps these were the motives for his making art so that he could create a universe that could be, at times symbolically controlled by himself as the maker, or at times could be an expression of some inner conflict or grief that he had not realized and that he had not resolved in a conscious manner. The impact on me had been my promotion of a principle of simplicity as a guide for Hubert. In a way neither of us trusted the other to deliver what we each needed. What had also emerged, as a striking marker of Hubert's anxiety, was his desire not to have to present me with a "problem" and his predilection for racing ahead to "solve" the problem rather than allowing solutions to evolve. Hubert felt the impact of time on his ambitions in other ways. He was impelled by time, experienced in deadlines that constrained him to create. He was also out of synchronization with time in

his choice of “*apropos*” themes.

My own uneasiness about the political issues in Québec had led me away from Hubert’s clearly personal issues to seeing his project as mostly about those larger political issues. Thus, I had not been as aware of his shift to a self-portrait theme, and I had not really noted what that might imply until after I had gone back and interviewed him.

I should note that Hubert had changed since he had been a student, and he also was concerned to point that out. He felt less insecure, more able to dialogue. As well, he said that he had enjoyed the DJSB, but I had the sense that was more in retrospect and that it was linked to reading the case-study narrative that had given him a sense of the continuity of that experience. He said near the end of the interview: “If I could do it again, for me, I wouldn’t be so sponge-like . . . I’d be more [openly] inflexible . . . I thought it was great and I enjoyed the course at the time [but] especially after reading this.” While the narrative that I had written had clearly not dealt with all of the issues that lay behind Hubert’s role in the DJSB, it had in some way helped him to see the shape of his experience and to provide him with a way to experience the ways in which he had moved on from that point in his life. This seemed to me to be one of the most useful aspects of the initial narrative construction and the follow-up interview. I was left feeling that it remained a question of time to see if Hubert could refocus his art making, following his son’s birth.

E. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Sharon: Mars and Venus opposed

Sharon was the second participant at Concordia for whom I chose to develop a narrative case study. In her first entry, February 9, 1993, Sharon presented me with three sketches and a somewhat rambling text that at first glance seemed to have little to do with her project (Sharon One: Water; Sharon Two: Water and Thumbnail; Sharon Three: Face). She was anxious about what to sketch and how to begin her dialogue and mused that probably her topic should be “The pain of being a woman” (Sharon, February 9, 1993). While I was somewhat mystified by her approach, I recalled that I had a similar

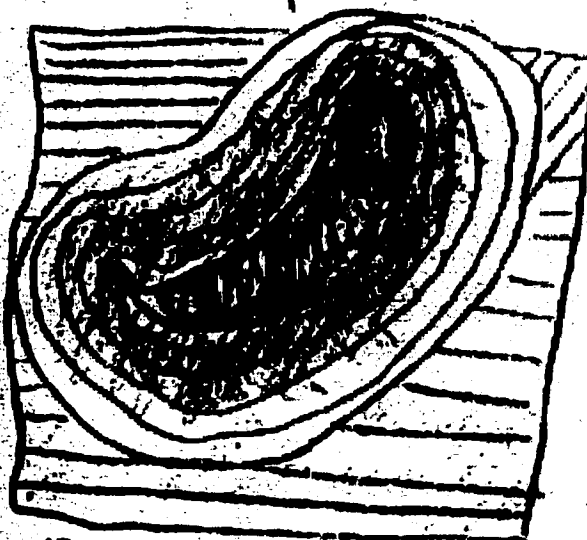
experience with her when she had presented her sketchbook materials to the class earlier in the course. There also I had seen meaning and pattern emerge out of what initially seemed to be somewhat chaotic. My insight into the order in her materials, at that time, was made more difficult because Sharon herself, although she was producing that pattern and meaning, did not seem to realize it consciously. I recalled her happy surprise when I pointed out to her that she had, in fact a structured set of ideas with a clear meaning. However, that structure and meaning, I must note, had been presented poetically, allusively, symbolically and not directly. As well, although she had concurred with my interpretation, it was still a situation in which I had made an interpretation and awaited her verification.

With all of that in mind I was prepared to view her journal sketches and text entries as needing interpretation. In a way, what I had received from other students were somewhat distanced discussions of what their artwork was about or how it was to be constructed. From Sharon I got small works of art in themselves that needed to be “read, interpreted, translated.” How these weekly entries were to be related to the overall project was another issue.

When I looked at the images that Sharon had submitted with her first entry there seemed to be an emphasis on the issue of fertility and growth and I could see how her focus on “[t]he Pain of being a woman” (Sharon, Feb, 9, 1992) might be connected. However I was also looking for a way to discuss her proposed triptych, or at least her way of working. It was clear that Sharon was unlikely to present me with the same kind of materials that the other students had and so, finding a way to discuss her work or way of working would be difficult. I was up against the problem that was to preoccupy me, at least, throughout the dialogue.

While it was a problem that I had defined for the most part, Sharon seemed to be somewhat aware of it. In her first entry, She wrote: “A sketch, a sketch, a sketch. My mind is full of everything, but what would I sketch?” (Sharon, February 9, 1993), and then launched into a series of seemingly unrelated ruminations and complaints.

God or is God within me and giving me the power of choice, and choosing my path. I can't struggle like my mother did. I promised myself that much. Will I always remember? Will the time ever be right? Something is happening this year. I'm ready for change. I Woke up HAPPY TODAY, EXCITED ABOUT GOING TO the High School. I WAS Surprised.



WATER
"
SYMBOL
OF
LIFE.

IT WILL STILL HURT. PROTECTED WITH LOVE. How do I deal with it? THERE IS A WALL. Perhaps I should let go + turn the page.

Why do I Feel so much? Is it the
female hormones? Maybe I was a
MAN in another life.



WE ARE ALONE IN THIS WORLD. BUT
I AM TIRED OF BEING ALONE. I'M
TIRED OF MY APARTMENT, OF QUEBEC,
OF OTHERS' POVERTY, OF LACK OF
LOVE IN THE WORLD. BUT I'LL PICK UP
AND IT WILL ALL BE BETTER.
MY TRIPTIC ---



Sharon Two: Water and Thumbnail



Sharon Three: Face

However, I think, in retrospect, that she was trying to bring out her problem of expressing directly and disclose, in image or text what it was that she felt important in relation to her project. In essence she was presenting me with her problem stated thus: "What should I sketch? How should I use this dialogue journal sketchbook?" In my response, I wrote, "There is a strong sense of the process in the drawings and even in your comments" (Collins, February 9, 1993). Here I was trying to lay out the idea, indeed the principle, that a presentation of process in artistic thinking, both through text and sketches, was the legitimate focus of our dialogue.

As well, I tried to emphasize that what she was conveying had to do with states of mind, awareness that could be presented directly. For example, in reference to a sketch of her proposed triptych, on which she did not comment in her text, I wrote: "You seem to be bringing together states of consciousness with your sense of place in the canal painting"(Collins, February 9, 1993). In my descriptive and explicative kind of response I was laying out the idea that what she was doing was right and appropriate for the dialogue journal sketchbook because it was a process conducive to art making. This kind of reinforcement and encouragement was akin to that offered by a nurturing parent (Beittel, 1972; Winnicott, 1993). It was also something that continued to characterize my responses to Sharon's entries.

Sharon's problem seemed to be global and preliminary. She was stuck getting started. My response was to emphasize the idea or principle of process. This did not provide for a specific solution. Rather it opened the door for further discussion; it allowed Sharon and me to continue our dialogue.

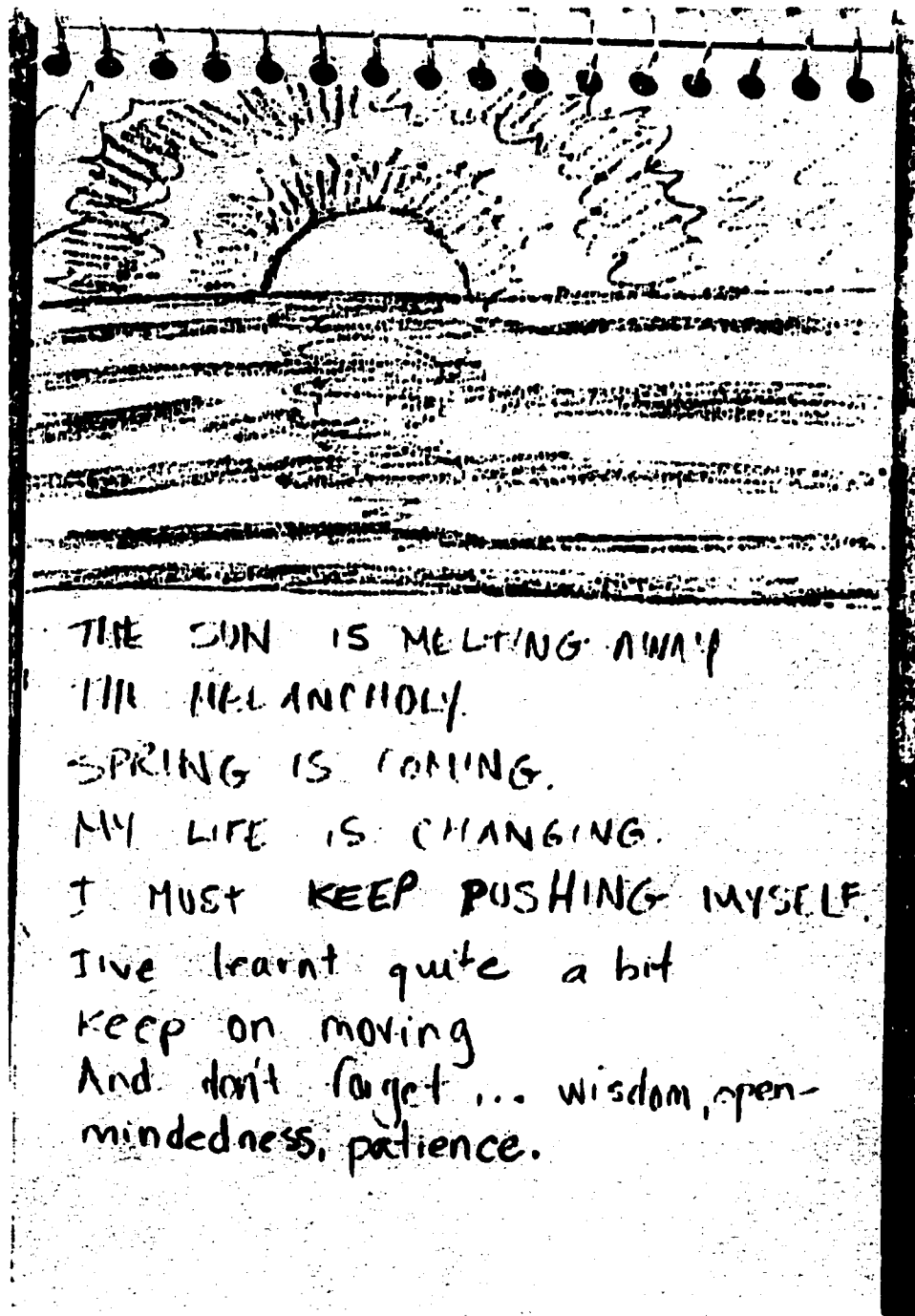
I did feel, at least with this first entry, that I was presenting Sharon with a "reading" of her sketchbook journal entry, itself a small artwork that had existed parallel to her proposed piece for the year-end show. There seemed to be some thematic links focused on Sharon's sense of herself as woman as expressed in both her entries and in the portrait of the woman in her proposed final work. (This was a self-portrait, I believe, but I'm not sure that I realized that at this juncture.)

Sharon's second entry was shorter than her first, probably, I thought, reflecting the fact that she had not as yet seen my response to her first entry. As I have pointed out, this was the result of how the exchange of journal entries had been set up. Here she seemed to shift her emphasis a bit. As well, her text and images (Sharon Four: The Sun) were more directly related. Even so, a significant part of her text was devoted to reflections of life in general and to admonitions to herself, for example: "I must keep pushing myself" (Sharon, February 16, 1993). I tried to offset what I saw as her somewhat gloomy view of things through a positive interpretation of her image of the sun and her poem about spring. This kind of encouragement, as I noted above, became a part of our interchange. It was less focused on the rational working out of some principle and more on the providing of a secure environment in which the dialogue could go forward.

I also tried to focus on the other two images that were connected to her triptych. These were sketches of a young man, one of which was labeled "Aries"; the other had a brief text below referring to astrological charts (Sharon Five: Triptic; Sharon Six: Aries).

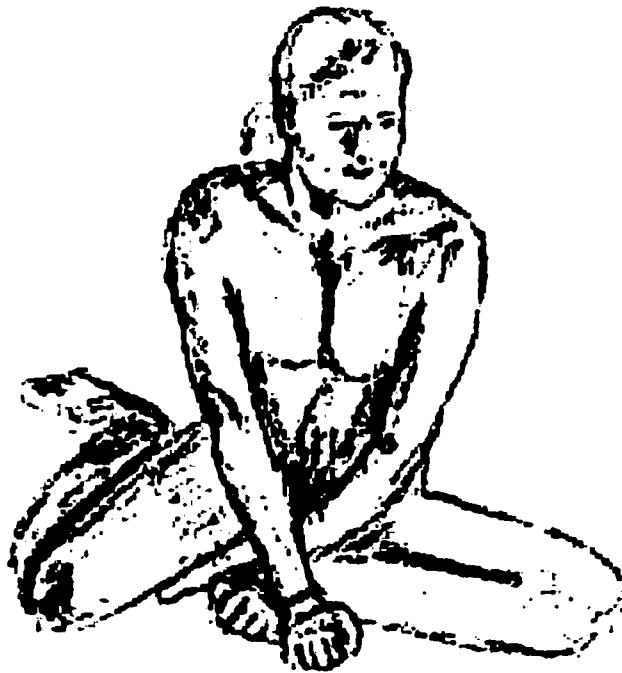
This struck a chord in me because, as I had explained to this class in the previous semester, I had used astrological symbols in some of my own artwork. My own stories of art making, my repertoire (Schon, 1985), began to emerge in response to what Sharon seemed to be proposing in her somewhat oblique manner. I pushed the astrological idea here also because it gave me a means of focusing on her project proposal. I saw that her sketch of the sun, her poem and her sketch, labeled "Aries", were all connected.

I wrote: "Aries is the first sign, Spring. It is ruled by Mars and is a sign of forceful but somewhat self-involved individuality. This 'Aries' image seems somewhat restrained. The young man feels held back and, in a way, reluctant to claim his 'Martian' aggression. You might think about how 'Mars' could be represented. Look at some classical Renaissance works. Read something about the mythology. Mars is a warrior and often a bit uncontrollable" (Collins, February 16, 1993).



Sharon Four: The Sun

astrological omens?



3rd TRIPTIC

Swinging 2



Sharon Six: Aries

It was not apparent to me at this juncture, but my references to astrology struck a chord in Sharon and indicated to her that I had a “similar philosophy of life” (Sharon, March 31, 1993). This by-chance intersection of an aspect our biographies, as I was only to find out at the end of the dialogue, helped to make the conversation possible. It was in some way a turning point in the story of our exchange, because it opened up the use of a certain kind of language that would allow for a deepening of our conversation.

In this response, and in others, I was writing about what I saw as connections between Sharon’s images and texts that she was presenting, connections to which she herself was not drawing attention. Did she see them? I suspected that she did not and that is why I continued to provide her with my “readings” of her puzzling collections of images and text.

If Sharon saw the problem each week as “What to sketch?”, I saw it as: “How to understand the sketches?”. While Sharon seemed to solve her problem from week to week within the framework of process that I had suggested, she still did not seem to be clearly conscious of the emerging meaning that I saw in her work, her writing and her life. While I continued to support Sharon in her process I also hoped to see her develop a more self-reflective approach to what she was doing. I wanted her to take possession of the meanings in her work.

In her next entry (March 3, 1993) Sharon did not directly reply to my comments about her work; however, the subject matter remained consistently focused on male-female issues. These had been touched on in her first two entries where she had mentioned the “Pain of being a woman” (Sharon, February 9, 1993) and where she had presented a sketch of a young man from her triptych proposal and titled it “Aries.” I had responded to her presentation of those issues in her art making so the continued discussion of them made me feel that we were somehow “in sync”.

Her sketches (Sharon Seven: Male Gender; Sharon Eight: Doodle; Sharon Nine: Composition Detail; Sharon Ten: Composition Detail) here seemed to focus on those

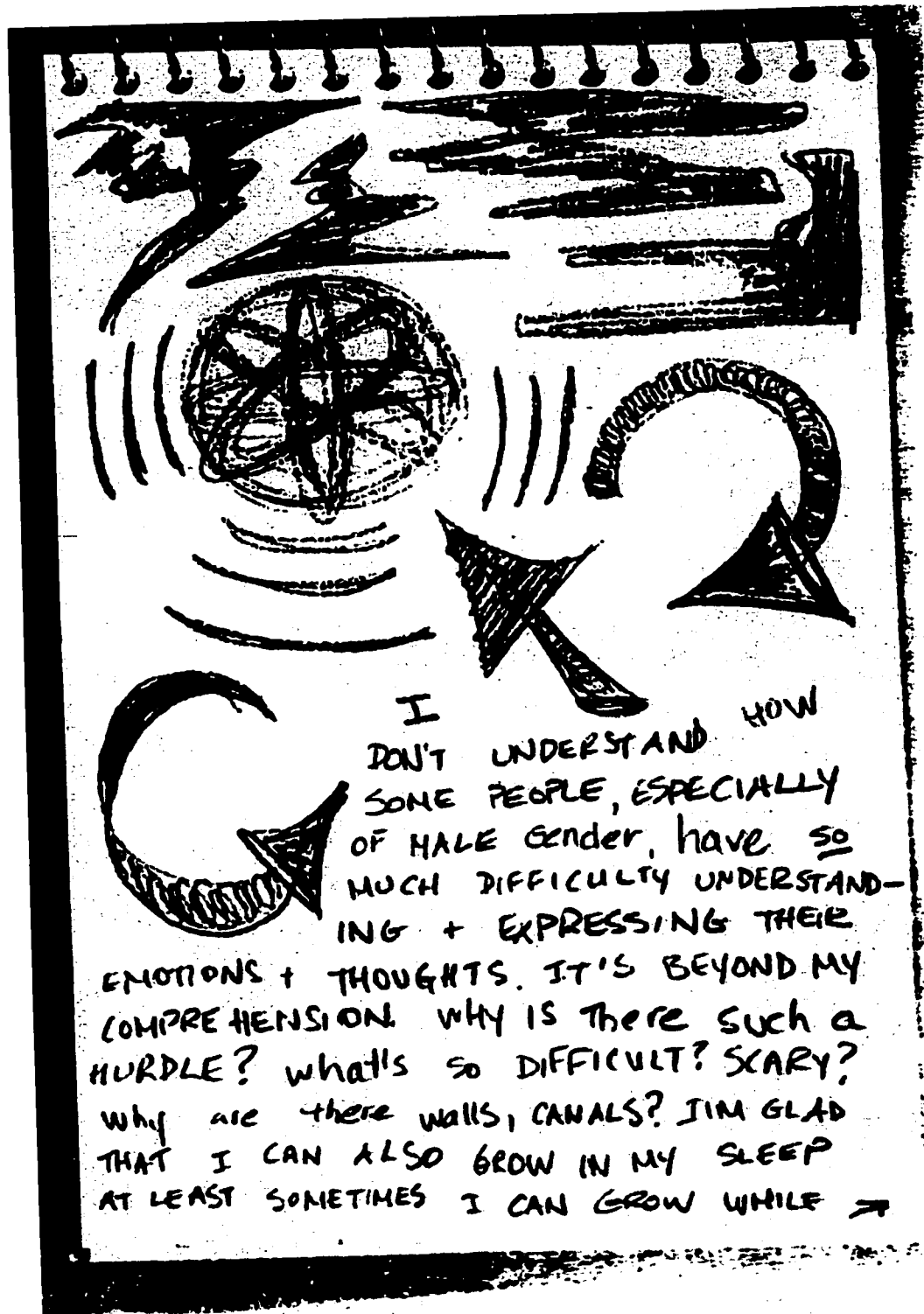
same issues expressed both in symbolic forms (e.g. arrows directed at circles) and representational forms (e.g. a sketch of the young man and young woman back to back). As well, her text took up the lament about communications problems between men and women, particularly her experience of the difficulty of men in “understanding & expressing their emotions & thoughts” (Sharon, March 3, 1993). While that was a complaint about a real-life problem and not a direct comment on her painting project, her query: “Why are there canals, walls?” (Sharon, March 3, 1993) did seem like a direct comment on the central image from her proposed triptych, which depicted a scene from a Venice canal. This image was set between the images of the man and woman. Sharon seemed to be continuing to comment on her artwork by reflecting on the issues in life, and in her life, to which it was connected.

I didn’t feel I was really in a position to deal with her real-life situation. My goal was to enter into a dialogue about her art and any problems that it presented. Even so, that art was obviously growing out of her real life. There was a bit of hair-splitting going on in my mind here, because just as her art was clearly intertwined with her life and reflections thereon, so too would be my comments.

I turned to Jung for a language to keep the conversation going. I focused on Sharon’s art and the meanings it seemed to present in a Jungian context. I wrote that “here (in her third sketch) the male figure is interrelated, interconnected with the female. It makes me think of the animus-anima construct developed by Jung. There seems to be a coming together here in the symbolic realm”.

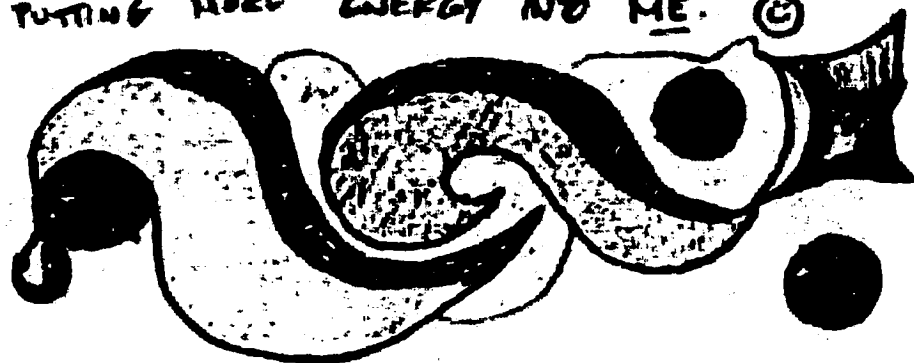
I continued: ” From a Jungian point of view that would explain your feeling more fiery, more determined since it would suggest an emergence of your animus or male energies that work more easily in the outer world and less successfully in the inner” (Collins, March 3, 1993). However, I emphasized that this kind of reading was not “absolute, but . . . metaphoric or symbolic”(Collins, March 3, 1993).

In some ways the stories of Sharon’s life were becoming more and more an issue in our



Sharon Seven: Male Gender

RESTING OTHERWISE I'D BE EXHAUSTED!!
 I FEEL THAT SOMETHING IN ME HAS
 CHANGED, CLICKED OR SOMETHING. I'M NOT
 AS WORRIED I'M MORE ACCEPTING OF
 MYSELF AND CARE LESS TO WORRY. I FEEL
 A BIT MORE FIRM. FINALLY, A BIT
 MORE SPINE. FULL. LESS LIKELY TO JUST
 TAKE WHATEVER COMES ALONG + JUST
 DEAL WITH IT... I SEE MY CHOICES
 OF ACCEPTING OR NOT... THINKING OF
 "MY" SELF + MY NEEDS... FINALLY.
 PUTTING MORE ENERGY INTO ME. ©



I HOPE, AS A SPIRIT, I'LL BE LOOKING
 BACK + LAUGHING. I HOPE, AS AN OLD
 LADY, I CAN OFTEN LAUGH LIKE A NUT
 AND HAVE A BALL! LAUGH. DON'T TAKE LIFE
 TOO SERIOUSLY... YOU'LL NEVER GET OUT OF IT
 ALIVE ANYWAYS! ☺ IS IT THE HUSH BLOOD?

Sharon Eight: Doodle



Sharon: Nine: Composition Detail



Sharon Ten: Compositional Detail

dialogue. When she mentioned her “Irish Blood” (Sharon, March 3, 1993) this also drew on my stories since I was raised in an Irish immigrant family. I had series of images of such a life, including many drawn from the wildly superstitious variant of Catholicism of my grandparents. Although I did not bring forward those stories directly I stressed that such terms as “Irish Blood” were metaphors “for a particular cultural environment in which one tries to find one’s way”(Collins, March 3, 1993).

If I was drawing on my “repertoire,” my stories, I was aware that I was commenting in a way as much on Sharon’s life problems, allusively stated though they were, as I was on her art. In the interests of keeping the options open for both of us, as I interpreted her images and poetic texts to her, I was concerned to emphasize that this was one way (among many) of looking at the material. I wanted to make clear to her and to myself that I was choosing certain metaphors, just as she was, to extend my understanding of what she was showing me each week.

In all of this I began to see that we were developing a choral-like interchange. I was commenting on her texts and images, but she was not directly acknowledging my comments. Instead she was developing her themes in ways that sometimes echoed what I was saying, or continued ideas she had previously developed, and which I had echoed. This created a feeling, at least in me, that Sharon was not so much engaged in creative and reflective moves, but that she was circling around the meanings in her work and life in an intuitive and reverie-like manner. I felt that I had to simply trust and encourage that process.

In her next entry Sharon went on with her comments about the emotional struggles in her life. Here, however her texts seemed to be more integrated with her images, the latter acting as illustrations for her comments. In one case (Sharon Eleven: Water Diagram) images of a bottle being filled and emptied were direct reflection of her description of her self, “always emptying & needing to fill”(Sharon, March 10, 1993). In a way this seemed to describe our exchange that seemed like the container of the fluid motion of Sharon’s thoughts and feelings.

The other image of a hand (not shown) was more characteristically linked to her text in a poetic way. Although she had not directly acknowledged my replies to her entries, her comments on her family and her friend were couched in astrological terms. This I took as some confirmation of my encouragement to look into an astrological approach to her art making. That she was continuing to reflect on the differences between men and women, here extending that reflection to her family, I took as further information about the way Sharon's biography motivated her proposed triptych.

As usual, I was inclined to encourage her about her art making. Here, as well as noting the clearer connections between her sketches and her text, I also emphasized that she seemed to be trying out different kinds of visual solutions to her "art making" problem that continued to be focused on male-female communications. From my viewpoint her "effort to integrate your text and images [in this entry] seem(ed) connected to your larger [proposed] piece"(Collins, March 10, 1993). Her comments on her sketches seemed to be quite direct and I thought my recognition of that might encourage more direct comment on her proposed painting. In essence I was returning to the principle with which I had introduced the dialogue journal sketchbook to Sharon and the other participants: that images and texts could be seen as connected and mutually supportive or explanatory. As well, I was continuing to encourage Sharon to keep on sketching, because, as I had suggested in my first response, it was her process that counted.

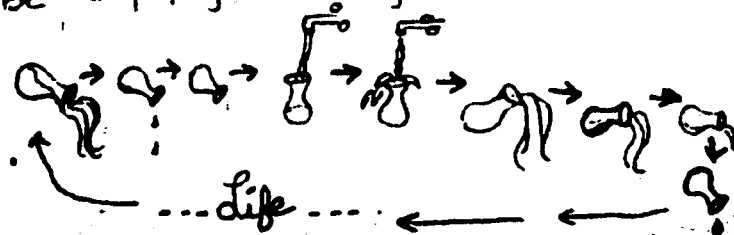
Even so, what was becoming apparent was that a simple definition of a problem (e.g. "What to sketch"), and a recognition within this question, of a "stuck" situation (Schon, 1985) were not really going to provide any sense of a discovered problem. What seemed to be going on here was a process of rumination, of gestation around the meanings connected to Sharon's proposed triptych (Milner, 1957; Erhrenzweig, 1970; Rose, 1980). I saw it as a process that needed to be trusted, encouraged and protected. Where it would lead I wasn't sure though I was confident that Sharon could complete what needed to be done on her already started work. How she would eventually understand that work seemed to be what was at stake in our dialogues.

It's bizarre... I'm feeling somewhat
 neutral lately... like ...
 I've often been... then
 Now I'm feeling... ?

(MARCH 93)

I'M CHANGING, I CAN'T HELP IT + IT'S
 SCARING ME. WILL I REACH A POINT OF NO
 RETURN? What will happen with us? The aries is
 very mixed up + often seems far away. Why
 the repression? Was it the VIRGO MOM?
 The PISCES father? My life lessons seem
 to all be connected to emotions + emotional
 people .. my pisces mom, my cancer dad,
 They both live in their own screwy worlds.

CRABBY FISH + FISHY CRAB!
VOLATILE SAG! SAGGY SISTER... Full
 of anger. Uranian philosopher ...
 forever pondering all others... Filling my
 jug to pour out again. I seem to always
 be emptying + needing to refill.



↑ ... LIFE FILLS ME UP. ↑

Sharon Eleven; Water Diagram

That understanding would only come over time, as the story of our exchange unfolded, and not as a result of some direct intervention on my part.

On March 16th I received a double entry from Sharon. The first part, which I assumed included a sketch of a weeping woman (or at least that was how I saw it), was current. The second part, which related an incident from her class placement, was dated the previous week. I dealt with both in my response.

Although Sharon had sent me an image of a weeping woman (Sharon Twelve: Weeping Woman), which I saw as consistent with her desire to sketch the “Pain of being a woman” (February 9, 1993), she seemed to be more positively oriented here. She wrote: “Balance has been restored” (Sharon, March 16, 1993) and she quoted Kahil Gibran on the unfolding of the soul (not shown). More of her text focused on the previous week’s in-class incident where she had to confront her students. Here she emerged triumphant and she attributed that to “my masculine . . . finally” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). Here Sharon seemed to be more positively focused. She wrote about her masculine energies in a way that echoed my earlier comments to her about the animus and anima. (Collins, March 3, 1993). Although she was not directly acknowledging the influence of that, I felt that in her echoing of it there was a further sign that our dialogue was proceeding in the right direction. In some ways, I was modeling a language for her (Schon, 1983, 1985; Perkins, 1994) and she seemed to be using that language in her commentaries.

I was also intent on emphasizing the links between her sketchbook dialogue and what she reported as happening in her classroom. I pointed to the links between her organic images in her sketches, her quote from Gibran on the ordered flowering of nature and the flowering that followed when she applied order in her classroom. Perhaps, in retrospect, I was pushing the connections a bit, but Sharon’s continued metaphoric and symbolic mode of working seemed to call for that kind of awareness of linkages.

In keeping with my enunciation of process as the supporting principle of our dialogue, I was trying to show that her processes, emotional, intellectual, artistic were all synchronic,



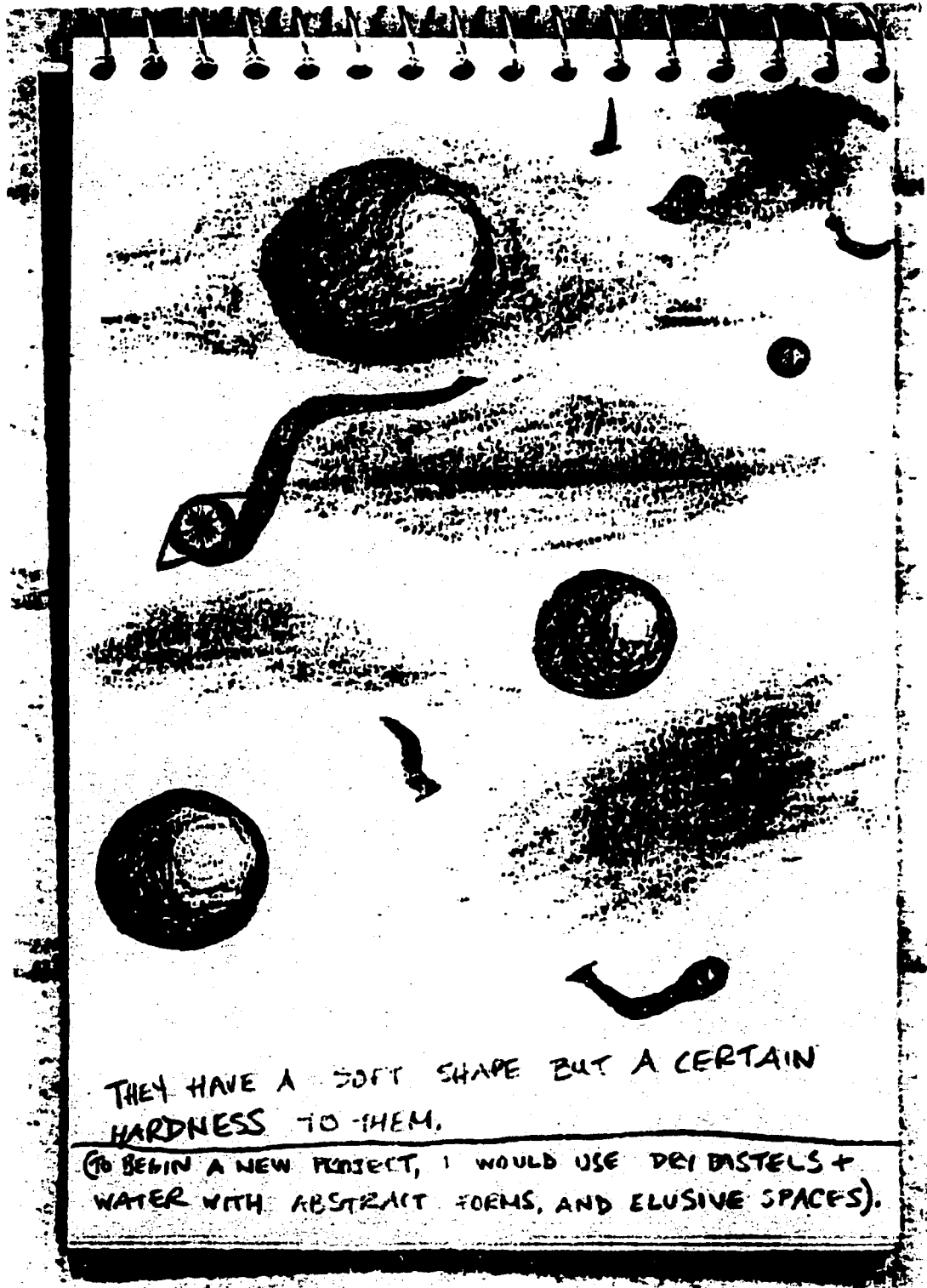
Sharon: Twelve: Weeping Woman

and supported and reflected each other. This was also in line with my desire to emphasize that text and image work together to communicate an idea, situation etc. However perhaps, at that time, I was also suggesting some boundaries to her vis-à-vis linking her journal entries more directly to her project.

March 21st was our second to last contact, not counting the final summary essay. At this point Sharon seemed to be integrating text and image in her sketchbook entries in a more direct manner (Sharon Thirteen: Spheres One; Sharon Fourteen: Spheres Two). Here she talked about an astrological event, the conjunction of Uranus and Neptune. Her image of two globes coming together against a vague space that could be just that - space, was on the same page as the text, and seemed to illustrate it directly. As well, she included sketches of symbols that high school students used but “don’t necessarily understand” (Sharon, March 21, 1993).

I found that comment quite striking because, from the beginning of our exchange, I had a sense of Sharon doing something like this. Her second sketch was also of a globe and an object that could have been a spermatozoon. It echoed both her first sketch here and earlier ones. She made no direct comment on the sketch, which left her intentions in some doubt, from my viewpoint.

However, I saw this entry as an opportunity to raise the question of whether or not Sharon understood the communications process in which she was engaged. It seemed to rely on poetic resonance among her images and her texts and on a paralleling of themes between her sketchbook entries and the theme of her larger triptych. Behind this was my desire for her to see connections between text and image, between sketchbook and triptych, between classroom and art making. Perhaps as well, I wanted to help her to see that whatever “emotional test” (Sharon, March 21, 1993) she was facing that there was a web of meaning in her actions, in her art and life. The principle at stake, as I saw it, was that of linkages between text and image, between life and art, and the way that reflection on those linkages could reveal meaning.



THEY HAVE A SOFT SHAPE BUT A CERTAIN
HARDNESS TO THEM.

(TO BEGIN A NEW PROJECT, I WOULD USE DRY BRISTLES +
WATER WITH ABSTRACT FORMS, AND ELUSIVE SPACES).

Sharon Thirteen: Spheres One

YET ANOTHER EMOTIONAL TEST. IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE A DELAYED REACTION IN THIS AREA... ONE WEEK LATER, THE TEARS COME, I TALK, + HAVE A WARM SHOWER. I FEEL BETTER NOW + CAN CONTINUE MY JOURNEY.

THE MORE ONE FEELS, THE MORE THERE SEEMS TO BE A NEED TO "LIGHTEN UP" TO AVOID OVERLOAD OR OVER-SOMETHING. MAYBE THAT'S WHY I LOVE TO LAUGH.

URANUS + NEPTUNE ALIGN 3X THIS YEAR... CAUSING MAJOR re-evaluating OF WHAT WE BELIEVED IN.



SYMBOLS THE HIGH SCHOOL KIDS USE A LOT...
☺, Ⓢ, MALCOLM X, BUT
DON'T NECESSARILY UNDERSTAND.
THEY KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT
BUT DON'T DO --- THEY LEARN
FROM THEIR PARENTS... IF THEY
HAVE PARENTS AROUND.

Sharon Fourteen: Spheres Two

Connecting her process to that of her students, I wrote: "Your use of these images reminds me a bit of the way you say the students use images. They use them a lot but don't or can't make conscious what it is that the symbols mean"(Collins, March 21, 1993). It would have been easy to simply reflect on this situation as one in which I was interpolating my own views into Sharon's universe of art and life. However, I was trying to make her aware of a process, which she had confirmed in an earlier situation when she had presented her sketchbook in class. I reminded her of that as I tried to point out to her how she was "integrating text, image, feeling" (Collins, March 21, 1993).

In light of how I had seen the problem in our dialogue exchange, my comments here felt like a kind of turning point. They allowed me to bring forward the issue of creative, reflective practice. I was setting this, in light of her comments on her students, against what I saw as a largely intuitive mode, a reverie-based procedure in Sharon's sketchbook journal entries. This wasn't to suggest problems with her processes, which I had already identified as supportive of art making, but rather to point out that the kinds of interpretations that I was making of her work were within her capacity to make, as an artist and teacher, both for herself and for her students. I also felt that the feedback that she could then provide for herself would also help her to answer, on an ongoing basis, her original question: "What to sketch?"

Sharon's final entry, prior to her presentation of her work and her summary essay consisted of a series of images and quotations taken from various sources (Sharon Fifteen: Spheres Three). These continued her astrological and hermetic themes referring to the four alchemical elements: earth, air, water and fire (Sharon Sixteen: Earth Heals). The images here were clearly symbolic illustrations of her text. As well, the way she seemed to bring her images of the elements together in a circular form reminded me of Jung's Mandalas though in a sketchier form.

This was Sharon's final entry and I wanted to find in it some summation of what she had been doing throughout the dialogue with me. What I came back to was my descriptive interpretation of her poetic and allusive approach to both her images and her texts. I saw

her thinking process moving “in analogical, metaphorical steps”(Collins, March 29, 1993). This I considered fertile ground for creative art making. In a way I was trying to summarize for Sharon the principles I saw as underlying our dialogue. They weren’t principles that I had directly suggested she apply to any problem in her art making, though I had encouraged her in her astrological references and in the Jung-like meander through her visual symbols. Even as I had encouraged her to continue to develop her poetic, metaphoric and reverie-based activities, I had been encouraging her to apply a certain principle, a certain approach to our dialogue and to her art. However, it was one she already used temperamentally, and not one that I was bringing in from my side. Certainly my own art practice, where I had drawn on similar symbol systems as Sharon (though in a more self-conscious manner, and where I had tried to emphasize unconscious process), conditioned me to accept Sharon’s approach, to see its value and to let her be.

What all this meant to her I was unsure, even though she had kept up the journal entries and persisted in making her final art work. I looked forward to her summary essay with some hopes that she would refer to, if not explain how my input had affected her art thinking and art making.

Upon reading that final summary essay I discovered that Sharon had found the process of the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange enjoyable. What seemed most important to her was that I had given her so much “positive feedback without trying to get me to change my approach” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). This confirmed my decision to exemplify rather than enforce the principles that I wanted to convey: drawing useful connections between text and image, between art and life and accepting the time-based process that shows such connections.

I had done so by interpreting those linkages in Sharon’s entries. She admitted to being surprised at “how perceptive and accurate your analyses were” (Sharon, Mar 16, 1993). At first I thought this could indicate that she had preconceived notions of what she was doing, and I had been “hitting the nail on the head” (Sharon, Mar 16, 1993).

AIR FRIES ME, FIRE TRANSFORMS ME,
WATER SOOTHES, EARTH HEALS ME,
AND THE BALANCE OF the Wheel goes
round - round,

AND THE BALANCE OF the Wheel GOES
ROUND * * *
- Eclipse:

...WE LIVE IN ALL THINGS,
ALL THINGS LIVE IN US.



- Stephanie Kaza

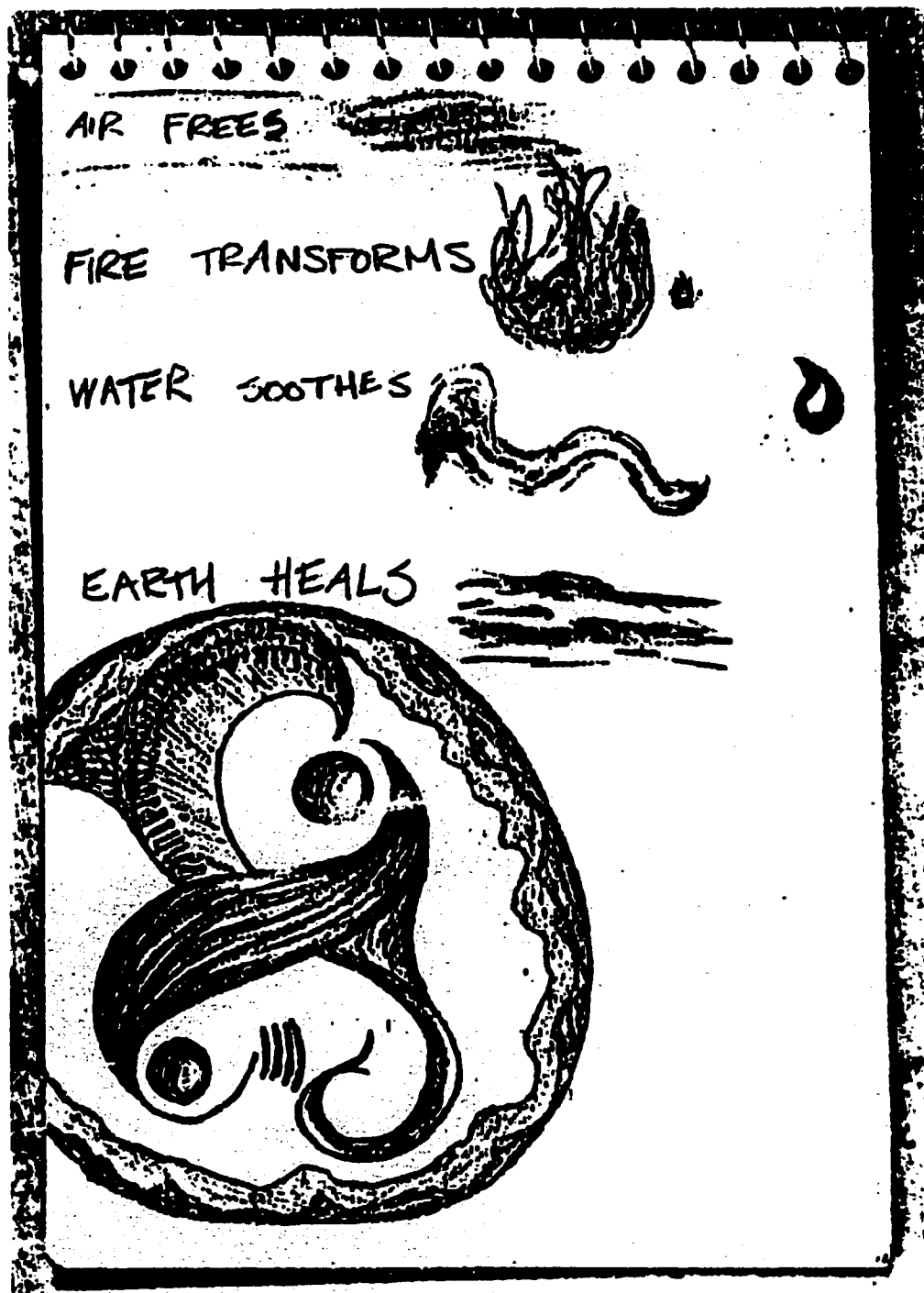
LOVE WANDERS ABOUT THROUGH THE
SENSES,

AND THEN IT STORMS THE SOUL WITH
ALL ITS POWERS,

- Mechthild of Magdeburg

MAY THE DREAM SEEDS YOU HAVE PLANTED
TAKE ROOT, AND FLOWER, AND COME TRUE ...

Sharon Fifteen; Spheres three



Sharon Sixteen: Earth Heals

However her following comment, that she saw “[t]he dialogue . . . almost like some sort of psychoanalysis session”(Sharon, Mar 16, 1993), suggested to me that my interpretations had come as novel and, perhaps, as somehow liberating.

She emphasized that she was aware of her interest in an “unconscious” approach to art making. Congruent with my emphasis on the links between her classroom work and her personal art she pointed out that she had introduced one of her classes to a surrealist approach to art making by introducing a “unit on surrealism with my grade 10 and 11 class” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). As well, she saw herself “working in an automatist-realist manner” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). She also confirmed my belief that in her dialogue journal entries she was discussing issues relevant to her project even though she did not refer directly to that project. Her final triptych she saw as being “very symbolic for many of the experiences I wrote and sketched about” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). Her affirmation that “It almost seems like there was some creative energy that knew what it was doing while my rational mind was unaware” (Sharon, March 16, 1993), seemed to me to confirm the usefulness of my interpretative approach. I was both pointing to the significant connections between her texts and her images, but also allowing for the process to occur that was leading her to some sense of what her work meant. Her own realization of what she was doing, however, came only as a conclusion to the process.

Since she had never really indicated throughout the dialogue that my comments were useful or helpful in directing her awareness, it was somewhat of a relief to find that such had been the case. However, as I have already said, occasionally she had seemed to echo my comments directly (e.g. in her comments about the emergence of her masculine side), and there was always a choral-like rhythm that I believed I detected in our exchanges. The summary comments seemed to confirm my belief.

What helped in all of this, from Sharon’s viewpoint, was that I “seem[ed] to have a similar life philosophy” (Sharon, March 16, 1993). Certainly I did understand Sharon’s language re astrology and her concerns with spiritual issues. Some of my own stories, even though I did not make them completely evident, complemented Sharon’s stories. I

had made art using astrological symbolism; I had an Irish upbringing; and I had used a metaphoric and analogical way of thinking as I made my own art. The difference seemed to be that I was much more conscious of these elements in my life and so I could bring them forward more clearly as processes than Sharon could. In a way I could name what she was doing, or so it seemed to me. Her confirmations of that in her continued practice and in her summary essay lent credence to that belief. This contributed to the process in which I linked her various practices, in her project, her dialogue journal sketchbook and her classroom. She accepted my interpretation of those links; she found them helpful.

I thought that Sharon's comments in her summary essay "marked a real step forward in your consciousness of your art process" (Collins, March 31, 1993). What also struck me was the way in which she had explained the connections between the themes in her sketches and her final painting (Sharon Seventeen: Final Triptych). She had done this most particularly when she was speaking about her work in the final class presentation. "Your sense of uniting polar opposites I had seen in your sketches but you brought it out more clearly here, especially in your comments about your triptych" (Collins, March 31, 1993). Since one of the aims of this process was to make such self-reflective consciousness possible, I felt that the dialogue journal sketchbook had been successful, at least in Sharon's summary.

Throughout her exchanges with me Sharon had ruminated on issues regarding male-female interactions both in the real world and in a metaphoric way in terms of her inner world. Only in the end did she clearly express the connections between her project and her ruminations. My final comment was meant to leave the interpretative movement of our dialogue open ended. I wanted to affirm that in the end only she could decide what her work was about and what kind of sense it made. "Remember, however, that you are always the final arbiter, in the interpretation of your work. Responses, such as I provided, can be helpful in providing orientation but it still comes back to you as to whether or not such responses make sense" (Collins, March 31, 1993).



Sharon Seventeen : Final Tryptich

Even so I believe where meaning emerged out of this dialogue that we both participated in creating it. I did not find myself trying to help someone solve an articulated problem about art making, even though Sharon started by getting stuck on the question “what to sketch? ”. Rather, I found myself trying to allow for the emergence of meaning from the ongoing ruminations on the process by the artist in this instance. I was a kind of mid-wife in that process, but my actual role was one of encouraging nature to take its course. In that role I did affirm over and over again the principle that I had identified as important at the beginning, that there is a connection between text and image and that meaning in one area (e.g., art) reinforces, complements and reveals meaning in the other (e.g. life). Sharon’s final recognition of that in her summary essay and in her presentation about her project, the triptych, seemed a confirmation that my approach was the right one.

At the same time, as Sharon said, the similarities in our philosophies and so of our languages, which grew out of our experiences and our biographies was the ground for any such realizations. This, of course was serendipitous. Although neither of us made those stories explicit they seemed to be similar enough that we understood one another, though I was more conscious from the beginning of what was happening. Here Sharon’s reflections on her life and her art did not seem to be reducible to a model of a self-reflective creative process. Instead it seemed to exemplify a more organic growth that had realizations as its outcomes but which were hidden in its early stages. At the same time, because Sharon did not seem to be participating in the mutual self-reflective process that the DJSB was meant to support, I found myself modeling a language that would make that process possible.

If I could recognize a plot in our exchange it was not that of complication and crisis, but rather that of the meandering type explored by Sterne (1960) in “Sentimental Journey.” A sense of linkages between aspects of her life, her art and her teaching was being built up throughout the exchange between Sharon and me. When the web of these linkages was complete the meaning and the shape were apparent, and the story was over.

F. Sharon's interview

I met with Sharon on the same weekend that I saw Hubert. She also had begun to teach, in her case, for the Protestant Board in Montreal. She seemed more relaxed than when I had known her as a student. We conducted the interview in the same art education seminar room where I had met Hubert.

Sharon had differed from most of the other participants in that she did not acknowledge my participation in the exchange until the end, and she did not, it seemed, relate her weekly sketches (or most of them) to her final piece. I had interpreted her sketches for her and she had, in the end, acknowledged the perspicacity of those interpretations, saying that the whole thing had been like a mini-psychoanalysis.

As I had constructed the narrative case studies I had noted that she had strong capacity for reverie, for symbolic formations, for focusing on inner and subconscious material. Her conscious reflective processes seemed to be weak, and she seemed, as I have said, unable to surface from her reverie and to engage in thinking about her project in a direct way, either through text or image construction (sketching). Because of this noticeable departure from what I saw as a linked art making process, one which drew on reverie to support a reflective activity, and vice versa, I was interested to find out what Sharon thought of my construction of her case study narrative.

In response to my initial questions about the accuracy of the case study she said: "I was really excited to get it and read it . . . I was really surprised by how accurate your analyses were about a lot of things . . . There was nothing that struck me as off base."

Then I asked her directly if she had been aware of what she had been doing during the DJSB or if it had all been intuitive. Of course my analyses seemed to indicate the latter.

Initially she confirmed that her sketches had been "more unconscious" and that while she had "an interest in the forms (she) didn't realize what (she) was up to." At the same time

she began to place this unconscious sketching in a context. The period of the DJSB had been “a turning point in (her) life.” She had gone through “something really hard . . . At one point [she] was kinda like in a daze.” Her dialogue journal sketchbook had fitted into this in a cathartic manner even though she hadn’t really understood the images that she was drawing.

She did confirm that she saw stories herself as important in art making and that there was a story behind her art about “what was going on in my personal life.” A lot of the story was about the relationship between the male and the female. I had presented that idea to Sharon during my interpretations of her sketches, but she did not acknowledge those interpretations directly, for the most part, until after the DJSB was finished. She told me that: “Going through the art making and the journals I got something . . . It was a big learning experience at that time in my life ... What motivated me at that time, it was almost therapeutic.” That this response of hers was time bound, that is within the process of her own life narrative, was clear when she said: “If I hadn’t been in such a daze maybe I could have looked more at what I was writing and drawing . . . I was making my own symbols. I hadn’t figured out why. I was aware that I wasn’t sure what the sketches were about.”

Certainly this situation, her “being in a daze,” so to speak, had helped to create the situation in which she drew and I interpreted the drawing. For Sharon this paralleled dream interpretation or, one might say, a literary interpretation.

Sharon had appreciated that. She said that was “the first time I remember education becoming ‘educare’ leading forth; that’s what you were trying to do.”

However, the situation wasn’t quite what it appeared to be, and Sharon went on to say that she was aware that “some of the stuff (with which she was dealing) was so personal I didn’t know how to talk about it . . . how to say things . . . without saying them.” In the interview, I began to understand some of her lack of response during the DJSB as an unwillingness to disclose something.

She elaborated: "I guess what I experienced . . . I was thinking about it on a lot of different levels, emotionally, spiritually, socially, how it would make me grow . . . I felt stuck . . . I didn't know how to express it. I didn't want to tell people. I didn't want to . . . I didn't want to be literal. You can't always use words for everything you experience. I felt stuck because I didn't know how to talk about it."

During the interview Sharon began to replicate the situation that had existed in the DJSB exchange. She had something that she didn't wish to disclose and that was creating a gap in our conversation. Now, however, at least I realized that. Even so, in the interview, this meant that I had to be prepared to accept a conversation with a gap in it.

The conversation diverged to a discussion of what made the DJSB work for Sharon (in spite of the lacunae) and what made her own work as a teacher possible. It came down to issues of trust and understanding. Sharon told me that when I began "writing back (in the DJSB) and I started seeing that you understood it was easier for me to give you my Journals . . . I trusted you with it." This, she felt, was the important issue in her own teaching. She had to "get a relationship with the kids . . . Once they start to trust you, that's the only way you can get them to learn."

I tried to bring in the idea of problem solving, or problem finding, but, at the same time, I noted that with Sharon I had "a dialogue without a definition of a problem I now understood this to be the result of Sharon not telling me something that related her life or to her art, but I did not say that to her in the interview at this point. Instead I said: "You did proceed along a path without actually talking about a problem . . . You did focus unconsciously on a solution." This got Sharon's enthusiastic agreement.

However, shortly, she went on to note that she had not really responded to my comments. She said that there were "a couple of things I didn't realize. I didn't realize that you needed to know what the end project. [was] . . . I didn't realize that . . . you needed to know more about the feedback you had given me. When I read that in your analysis [the

case study narrative] I went ‘O God, I didn’t tell him ...He doesn’t have a clue about what I’m thinking.’ On the other hand, I did clearly have some understanding of what she was thinking from her texts and images, because I gave her interpretations. As Sharon said: “I did agree with what you said and because of that I just kept going.”

This admission of her lack of response to my interventions was helpful, I thought, because it showed, in fact, that at the time of the DJSB, she had been distracted by whatever it was that was going on in her life, just as she had said. Sharon went on to note that she had experienced similar things with her students and that: “Usually where there’s a problem they can’t tell you . . . you have to do the work.” However, she admitted that she had not “connected that in my own teaching situation (to the DJSB) until now [in the interview].”

I also pointed out to her that I had a part in this, in that I had decided not to demand that she produce feedback in a more usual manner. Sharon said she had experienced something similar with her students. “You have to make a decision when to make an intervention. You have to go with your gut feeling.”

There was a feeling in the interview that we were both skirting some issue that Sharon wanted kept out of the discussion, just as in the DJSB. I shifted the discussion away from personal life issues to ask her about her approach in terms of which came first: image or text. Her response seemed to confirm my sense that she proceeded through reverie more than through reflection. She said: “I don’t know if I always think in words. For me I don’t know, I guess . . . Sometimes I get feelings about things and try to put words on them ...It’s easier to put images on them.” However, I realized that there seemed to be more to it than that and I went on, much as I had done in the DJSB, with an interpretation. “My sense is that you proceeded from a structured sense of feelings, a sensibility. You had feelings but tied to a structure, and out of those feelings came images and words.”

We seemed to have entered into a conversation around this issue, but Sharon went on to say that she had what she called a spiritual approach. I asked her to say more about that

and she responded by once again referring to her life experience during the DJSB exchange.

“For me (DJSB) it was spiritual in the sense that in this life that I had to learn certain things. The experience in my life at that time was almost like a rebirth, very painful, very hard, but it was meant for me to go that way.” And then she told me.

“What happened was . . . I had an abortion and it was really really bad . . . [This happened] in January or February. I thought upon so many things. I had to go through with everything. I was the one who had to decide, to figure it out . . . So that started the whole thing with me trying to find my balance between my feminine and my masculine.”

At this juncture the gap that had existed throughout the DJSB and throughout the interview up to this point closed. The shape of the dialogue and of Sharon’s art making became more evident. It was clear to me that my interpretation of her sketches had made sense, not just as psychologically based glosses on her texts and images, but as comments on her actual lived experiences. As well, her cathartic approach to sketching and writing made sense. At the same time, while I continued to see her as primarily an intuitive thinker and not a reflective one, I thought that her understandable reluctance to put her sketches in the context of her lived experience, during the DJSB, meant that the whole process of the exchange had been oblique and incomplete at the reflective level. She could not focus on, nor define compositional issues because to do so she would have had to make some explicit references to her own personal struggle. She was not able to do that because she was embroiled in it, “in a daze” as she said and because she did not want to tell anyone about it at the time.

Even so the DJSB had been apparently of use. I noted that I saw Sharon “as a good example of someone who operated intuitively and (whose) intuitive process seems quite positive.” Sharon confirmed this view saying: “A lot of it had to do with the dialogue, but more with my own life . . . I really liked our exchange. The whole thing was helpful, very helpful.”

In spite of all this she had not kept up a sketchbook practice, or much of an art practice, since leaving school. She did say that she was starting to do some work again, particularly writing.

Like Hubert Sharon initially confirmed the accuracy of the narrative case study, but then began to revise it. As with Hubert, the narrative of the DJSB and the practices of the participant turned around the lived personal narrative of the participant. In Sharon's case she noted that the DJSB had been therapeutic in her life narrative. That was based on trust between us, due to our "by chance" similar philosophies of life.

Sharon had proceeded in an intuitive manner without clear problem finding or solving instances in relationship to her art making. She worked in a state of reverie but did not surface. Hence it seemed to me that something was being omitted from the story. Sharon also noted in regard to her art making that images preceded text..

From my viewpoint, where the narrative was occluded, so too was the DJSB, and so too was the access of the participant to the full range of creative and reflective practices especially in terms of a mutual process. At the same time, the DJSB did provide Sharon with a sort of framework and one that she trusted enough to use in a cathartic manner. Out of that she was able to build a work of art that satisfied the requirements of the course and her own personal need to express her experience. Insofar as the DJSB was successful it depended on trust that, in this instance, seemed to arise out of a shared philosophy.

It is also worth noting that the interview, to some extent, replicated the DJSB exchange, because the important causal issues in the making of Sharon's art and in the way she approached the DJSB were not "on the table." As a result, the conversation proceeded somewhat obliquely in the interview just as it had in the DJSB exchange until Sharon was able to speak about her abortion. Not so incidentally, Sharon said that bringing this issue out now was appropriate for her and for me in this report.

As with Hubert, the DJSB case study-narrative seemed to help give Sharon the perspective that she needed to be able to fill the gap that existed in the narrative, as I had seen it, in her relationship to me as interlocutor, and in her claimed life experience. Hence, the issue of time and timing seemed to play a part in the same way that it had with Hubert.

G. Marie's Narrative: The grieving artist

My interaction with Marie began on February 9, 1993. Marie was studying part-time so she was not on a student teaching placement, but because most students were, the class did not meet, and so Marie corresponded with me as did the other participants. Meanwhile she worked part-time in a halfway house teaching art to psychiatric outpatients.

In her first dialogue journal sketchbook entry she sent me, along with her text a slide of Mexican figures made of papier-mâché (Marie. Image One: Mexican papier-mâché). The slide showed a grouping of figures in a brownish tone. They seemed to be hollow. I found these images evocative and poetic, perhaps somehow symbolic, but they also illustrated Marie's comments directly.

In her text Marie wrote about her project that she, along with the other students, was preparing for a year-end exhibition. She referred to a slide project and to slides of a Mexican nativity figure, one of which she had attached to her text. She said that she found these attractive because of "an elusive quality that intrigues me so much. I can't quite put my finger on what it is . . . they seem to live somewhere else, to be part of an existence I am excluded from. They are frozen in time - or at least their beautiful shells are" (Marie, February 9, 1993). They evoked in her a desire to capture the mysterious. She referred to sense of personal isolation that she seemed to feel was somehow connected to her interest in these figures.

Her text was not long, predominantly explicative and descriptive. However, I noticed that

woven into it were a variety of affective and reflective statements. She drew attention to her doubts, her wishes, and her likes. She noted the significance of certain issues and she contextualized all of this by abstruse and somewhat mysterious references to her own life. She referred to the related slides in her project directly and indirectly. All of this indicated to me that Marie was a reflective writer and I thought that this bode well for my work with her on this project.

My response picked up on her concerns. I referred to the Mexican figures in the slide and noted that what made them interesting to me was their hollowed-out quality. I related this hollowed-out quality to the absent feeling that one can pick up “working with the elderly, especially those with Alzheimer’s or those who have suffered serious strokes. Often one feels that the person has left and the body goes on functioning.” (Collins, February 9, 1993). I suggested that the mental absences produced by such illnesses can become haunting, like the images in the slide which Marie had sent me. I went on to discuss the relationship of photography to memory and loss and suggested that the importance of the slide of the figures might not be in the subject matter but the feeling it evoked. Although I did not realize it at the time this first interchange proved to very important for what was to follow.

My next communication from Marie came on February 16, 1993. In order to take advantage of the one evening that the students returned to Concordia for a psychology class, I had set up the interchange as follows. The student-participants generated their first entry in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook and then sent it to me. I received their first entry after their psychology class and they left, not to return until the following week. Thus by the time I was able to return my response to the participants, they had already written their second entry. It was only at the point at which the participants were ready to write their third entry that the “dialogue” really began. At the time of her second entry, Marie still had not received my comments in response to her first sketchbook journal entry.



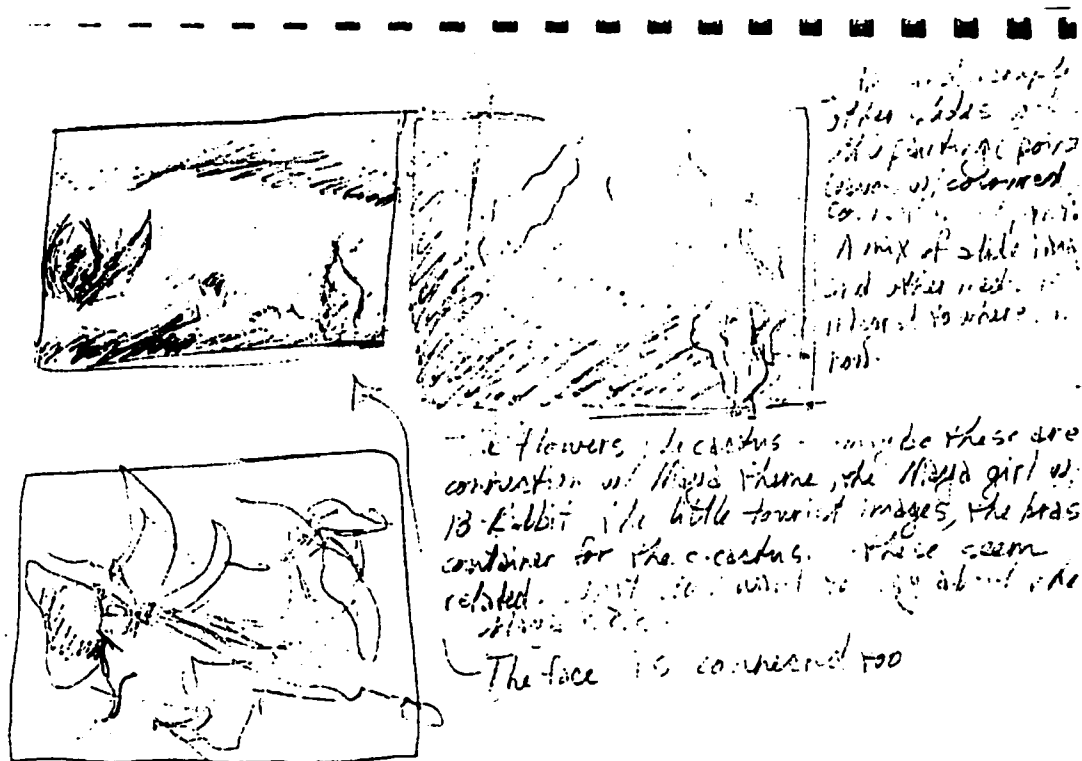
Marie: Image One: Mexican Papier-Mâché (Three Wise Men)

Thus her second entry did not respond to me but showed the further development of Marie's idea about a slide project. She sent me three images on a page with some rough notes (Marie Two: Three sketches). The images were: 1) a roughly drawn plant; 2) half of a girl's face recalling a finished drawing shown earlier and 3) a brass (?) pot with a plant. Her images were related to her slides and so were interpretations of them. As in the previous slide of the Mexican figures these roughly realistically drawn images evoked feeling. They seemed to show details of her proposed project and although representational, to have some symbolic references.

They were on a page from Marie's sketchbook along with a brief text that showed some of her thinking about the images. Those thoughts were dealt with as well in her direct communication with me. Thus the pictorial images were directly linked to both texts, but in terms of layout, had a closer connection to the sketchbook text itself.

This split text situation arose in later communications as well. Since her communications to me replicated or referred to such texts, I have chosen to deal primarily with what she wrote directly to me. In that communication, she referred to her art making process. She described how she looked at slides to find continuities in her images, etc., and then she did drawings from the "significant" slides. Her drawings were linked to a mental process; she wrote: "I brain stormed ideas from the drawings" (Marie, February 16, 1993). This seemed to be a successful process because she affirmed that she was close to a solution that would link her ideas.

I was a bit surprised that Marie could come to a resolution so quickly. However, her previous work in class had shown her to be a skilled artist and fairly clear about her intentions. In my response to her communication I tried to adapt my comments to the direction in which she seemed to be going. I suggested that the slides with which she was working could be integrated around a narrative, and that she should develop a storyboard that would allow her to organize the material more easily, more coherently.



Marie Two: Three Sketches

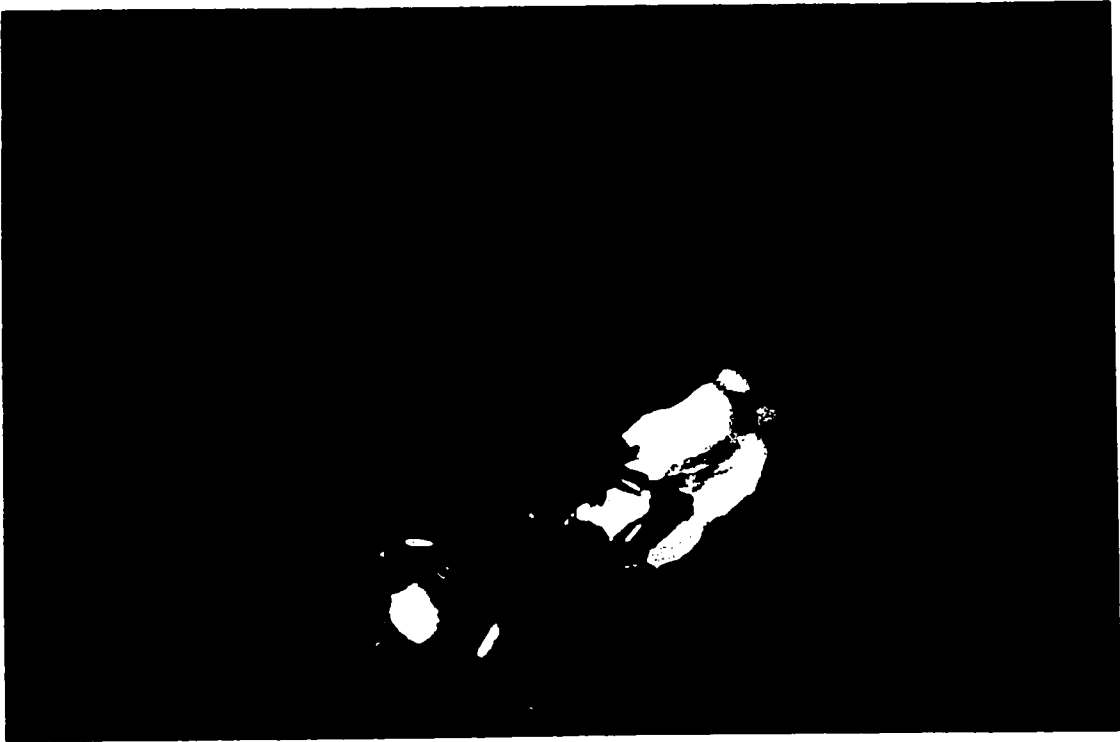
I suggested that she could “use the idea of narrative in a loose sense” (Collins, February 16, 1993). I wrote that I liked the sketches which she had submitted, because they showed the workings of her mind. In line with some of the comments we had both made in the first week I suggested that what also made the sketches interesting was their quality of mystery.

The next week, following the receipt of my first response, Marie sent me another slide (March 3, 1993). It was almost totally black with a vague area of light tone that might have been flesh, but suggested many other surfaces (Marie three: Unclear). I turned it over and over, looking at it, before I went on to read Marie’s text.

The slide had an illustrative relationship to Marie’s text. In some ways it provided an interpretation of the text. Although it showed some details it was vague and worked more on a level of evocation of feeling. Again there was a mysterious symbolism.

Marie began her text by commenting on how written responses to her works help her to focus. They revealed her own difficulty in focusing on the meaning of her work. A comment that I had made in response to her “Mexican” slide led her to the story of an old woman she had known who had a stroke and who became a shell of a person just as the Mexican figures were shells. Thus stories, or perhaps rather a specific story, began to emerge in our conversation. It was this story and its progressive unfolding that would come to play a significant role in the structure of Marie’s art making process.

At this point she discussed how her slides in her project seemed to be linked by a feeling and not necessarily logically or imaginistically. The “connector” slide she had included for this week’s image had only a vague, dark image on it. Going back to her theme of mystery she affirmed how the vagueness of the image left room for exploration and contemplation. She related this vagueness to the way memory works, referring to what I had written in week one about memory. She referred again to the slide, which she saw as carrying or representing a hidden sensuality. This seemed to be connected to the idea that images carry feelings and not just specific representations.



Marie Three: Unclear Image

In the end she noted an “eureka” about how her work could develop, and then closed, saying that she’d write about that next week.

In my response I commented on how the process she was engaged in seemed to be working. I related her story about her elderly friend to Barthes’ comments on his mother in his book Camera Lucida. I had also known an elderly woman who had a stroke, and whom I also experienced as absent. I wrote about this in response to Marie’s story. Then I commented on the “connector slide” that she had sent me. It was a vague image that I had struggled to make out before reading her text. I discussed how my sense of the slide had altered after reading her text comments on it. I also noted that her description of the slide as showing a “present, yet veiled sensuality” seemed to refer to an important element in all art making and experiencing.

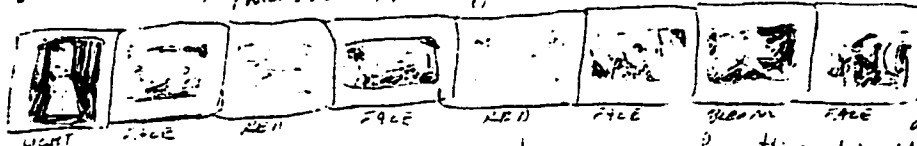
On March 10th, Marie sent me a page from her sketchbook that reflected a crisis into which she felt she had entered (Marie Four: thumbnails). She couldn’t get something happening with her slides, and they were the center of her project idea. The sketchbook page showed a sort of storyboard, very rough, in the lower half of the page. The images suggested a theme of faces but overall there was a sense of anxious haste in the work, a certain disorganization. The sketchbook text referred to the images more than the text written to me. The latter was more about her state of mind.

She felt so distraught about her block that she wanted to give up on the slide-show idea and return to painting. In her text she pointed out how she wanted to deal with themes of memory and loss related to my discussion of it earlier, and that she thought that she could do so in a painting. She ended on an up note pointing out that writing usually helped her to get things straightened out.

b) the light table helps get a clear idea of what the slides together make patterns, progressions.

big thing I notice is I don't have enough variety - 70% of slides are the Christmas cactus but there's seems to be no integration/connection to these and the ones of Bill's face, hands, the printed patterns and Mr. Thomas. I have no theme no inspiration as to how they fit in together as a whole. I have to make connections to the last slide thing I did but it had the connections of light, different objects/places appearing in different situations so there was some continuity. Here this is lacking.

Tried a different arrangement of slides (my best ones - historical, universal etc.) This was interesting w/ the ones. Theme?? I'm still getting.



in it, the faces of the slides getting to me. That I've been determined for some time. But time factor is breaking me out the pressure of putting it in the gallery and it's not going to that and finally I'm just not super inspired by the images before me. The idea is that and me and our memories/images was good I think. Can I modify that somehow? I know I can use any of the images I already have which bugs me. I've been taking all the slides and now I can't use them? What's the matter here?

Marie Four: Thumbnails

I was concerned to reassure Marie and pointed out to her that if she wanted to shift her project from a slide show to a painting she could do so, however, I also suggested that she might work on uniting her slides either via a formal theme or a narrative. Developing a storyboard, I also suggested, would help. I tried to take the pressure off, telling her to let it rest for a bit, to play with her resources. If necessary she could deal with “process” in her presentation rather than product. This latter comment suggests to me now how much I was concerned about her. I was somehow becoming anxious as she plunged into her crisis. However, I did have some distance, spatial and temporal, from which to consider the situation. In the end, I felt that all I could do was allow her to go through it as best she could and hope that she could do so in the time remaining for the completion of the project.

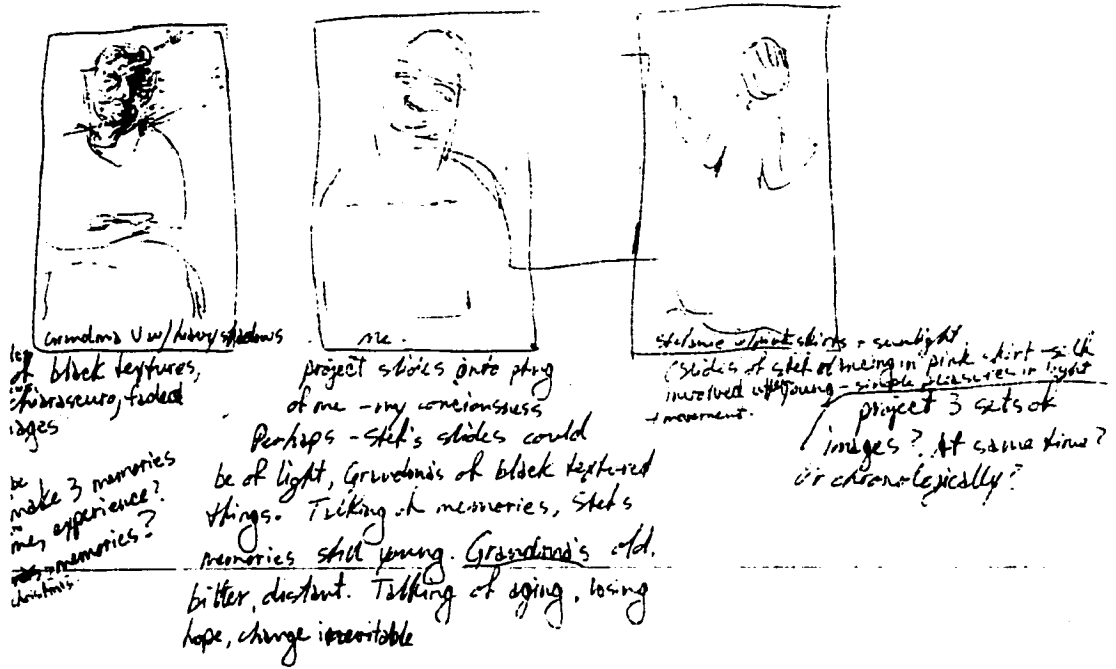
In her next letter to me (March 16, 1993) Marie went back a couple of weeks to her “eureka” to explain the shifts that she had taken in her project. At first she had wanted to do three paintings, one of a child, one of herself and one of her elderly friend. Slides were to have been projected on or beside these to suggest other themes.

She included sketches of that original idea and the changes that she now wanted to make. There were three pages of images. Two of them were from Marie’s sketchbook and incorporated images and text. The third was a laser print of a slide. The first of the two pages presented the original idea, which Marie said she had now discarded (Marie Five: Preliminary Triptych). Page two of the image/text pages presented a second idea, which Marie was now developing (Marie Six: Compositional Sketches). The laser image (Marie Seven: Mrs. G.) would appear in the final work.

She wrote that she envisioned a painting of three elderly women that she had known and of herself. The painting would deal with themes centered on problems of aging and the coming inevitability of death. These would be contrasted with the continuance of life and of nurture as represented by a meal laid on a table. Marie expressed some anxiety about the possibility of overloading the painting(s) with symbolic references.

4

Mar 16/3



Marie Five: Preliminary Triptych



Too much distance between the 3?? (Better w/me 1/2 in corner behind Tante...)

- Tante - 1/2 change chair - same as Mrs. 1900 and turned more towards table. She should hold some food maybe - have to show she's not as far gone as the other two. ~~the~~ Grandma V. should be slight bigger.

- Round table? Work on angles - G.V. off a bit.

Too obvious - no subtlety with separate things. in right corner. from full table u they sit perhaps subtle

Mar. 16/93

Marie Six: Compositional Sketches



Marie Seven: Mrs. G

Marie's explicative and descriptive sentences indicated her desire to explain her ideas through referrals to her images. She was clear about the significance of what she had done and was planning, showing, I would say, her strong reflective awareness. These were linked to her expressions of feeling.

Most of what I wrote focused on providing Marie with explanations, instruction and other sources of information. As well, I provided some support by recognizing the validity of Marie's new direction within the scope of the project. In my reply I told Marie that I felt that her location of her real concern on "aging," and on the three women that she had known, seemed to have allowed her to pull her project together. After looking at the sketches that she had presented and that indicated the shape of her proposed painting, I suggested that the painting could have a naturalistic air yet also be a comment on aging.

To follow that up I suggested that she look at other examples of how artists in different areas have dealt with the theme of aging. I referred to Margaret Laurence's old women, Larry Rivers' "Double Portrait of Berdie" and Rembrandt's Self-Portraits. I also thought it might help her to look at Linda Nochlin's book on "Realism" so I gave her that title. She had expressed some fears about aging, so in closing I encouraged her to set those aside. She seemed to have resolved her crisis and to be on her way to a somewhat different kind of project work.

On March 21, 1993 Marie presented a page of sketches, which included drawings of lilies and drawings of two of the women to whom she had been referring (Marie Eight: Flower Sketch). On a separate page, she included a laser copy of a slide of a lily (Marie Nine: Flower Image). As in other exchanges these images both illustrated her ideas and helped to interpret them. As well, the images helped to evoke the feeling that the project was "about." Marie talked about the way her original "slide project" was affecting her use of juxtaposition to connect the images, and she showed that in her sketches. She seemed to me to believe that by drawing (oil pastels) she could overcome the layout problems



Marie Eight: Flower Sketch



Marie Nine: Flower Image

created by her original slide project. She was enjoying the oil pastel drawing so much that she thought that she might not get to the “painting.” In the end she suggested that she might somehow incorporate some laser copies in the drawing.

My comments were largely supportive. I wanted simply to keep the process to which Marie had committed herself moving along. I made some compositional suggestions and re-assured her that what she was doing was quite good. Other than that I simply left it to her. She seemed to be deep into her process and there seemed to a real movement towards both artwork and an understanding of art process. I was beginning to want to see her final work.

By March 28, 1993 Marie was not quite finished with her revision of the project. In this penultimate exchange Marie presented more representational, yet symbolic drawings from her sketchbook that were meant to illustrate her final oil pastel drawing, both in detail and in composition (Marie Ten: Thumbnails Two). She described this final work, explaining why she focused on her friend, the elderly woman who had the stroke, and why she had left out the other two. She had also dropped out her own image, she said, as a way (was this a kind of ritual?) of separating herself from this woman who had been her friend and of overcoming her guilty tie to her. In this final work she brought in another image that tied her work back to her original Mexican figures. This was an image of an Egyptian “mummy” (shown in her sketches). Marie linked the old woman, her friend, as a shell, to the shell of the mummies and to her original slide of the Mexican figures, also shells. Thus, she maintained, her final oil pastel color drawings (constructed as a triptych) were a meditation on this emptiness.

Marie had brought together her images and the stories related to her own life and to people that she knew in a significant way. She had completed the circle that had begun with her slide of the figures. In my reply, I commented on her final solution (which consisted of three oil pastel works, one of her elderly friend, one of a lily and one of the faces of a mummified Egyptian figure) as appropriate. Although she had taken herself out of the final work in any direct way, yet the use of the lily, which could be seen as a

symbol of flowering womanhood, brought her back into the composition in a symbolic manner.

The process that led Marie to this resolution could be seen in the exchange that we carried on and yet there was a kind of mystery about it. This was an echo of the mystery of death, which Marie had experienced vicariously through her elderly friend. In this reply I referred Marie to Wallis Budge and Evans-Wentz, both of whom have produced books of the “dead.”

I also commented on the fact that art is often a vehicle for mourning and suggested she look up the works of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, who has dealt with grief in her writings.

Finally I told Marie how much I had enjoyed the “conversation” we had carried on in these letters and that I was looking forward to her finished drawing. I was to see it shortly thereafter in a class presentation and in the final exhibition for the graduate art education students at Concordia of that year.

Marie’s final work (April 6, 1993) for the student exhibition was a triptych in oil pastels showing a lily, an older woman, a mummified head on the respective sheets (Marie Eleven: Final Triptych). It was both realistic and symbolic and it seemed a fitting outcome of the process that had gone on both for Marie and between us. I asked her to comment on that process and how it had affected her work as an artist.

Marie told me that she found the dialogue journal process useful and pointed to a chance comment that I made that opened up to her the theme of her final work. The aleatory, meandering nature of the exchange led her to realizations about her relationship with the “elderly woman” in her past. This in turn led her to modify her project and develop it in ways more congruent with her feelings.



Marie Ten: Thumbnails Two



Marie Eleven: Final Triptych (oil pastel)

This seemed to be the crucial issue. As the memories of her past began to intrude they first plunged her into a crisis about how she should express them and then they shifted the idea of what her art product should be. The resolution of the crisis was not immediately total but took place over a number of weeks. Marie described how she found that the process of writing back and forth over those weeks helped her focus and re-focus her feelings and her art making.

Marie also wrote about how the experience of the dialogue journal sketchbook (DJSB) helped her in her teaching by making her more aware of how she could comment and respond to her own students' work. She described her own awareness of the need to make an emotional commitment to the dialogue journal sketchbook process and to develop openness with me. Her doing so was a key element in the successful nature of the experience. Thus the trust that she found in her relationship to me as a teacher played a large role in her ability to open up to the process of art making. She wrote that she would go on using writing as an adjunct to her art making since she now saw how it could open up the process for her.

Marie's summary of her engagement in the dialogue journal sketchbook was very complete, something which I appreciated both as a researcher and as her correspondent. In my response to her summary, I remarked on the strange, aleatory nature of the exchange we had at the beginning, which sparked her art process, putting her into a crisis and pointing to the way through it. Throughout this crisis and resolution, her thinking processes were well linked to her art making processes, and, as a teacher, I expressed appreciation that the experience had fed, as she said, into her own teaching. She seemed to me to be an exceptional student, one who could bring her reflective process to both teaching and art making in a successful manner. In the end, all I could do was wish her luck.

While there had been something similar by chance in the philosophies of life to which Sharon and I adhered, with Marie there was a parallel event or story in our pasts. My telling my story proved to be powerful in this instance as a means of encouraging trust. In

personal way, Marie and I were similar. By chance and by timing Marie was prepared to deal with her feelings about the story of Mrs. G. Again the personal narrative of the participants seemed to be decisive. As you may recall, timing had played a more restricting role for Hubert and Sharon

Marie experienced being stuck, of having a crisis, unlike Hubert or Sharon who both slipped past it in their own particular way. Marie was able to enter into a mutually reflective process. In that process of the DJSB, she worked over her images and feelings, both derived from a process of reverie, through problem finding and solving in regard to her image making. In this she was impelled by anxiety as were Hubert and Sharon but she seemed able to resolve that anxiety more consciously in her art making and the related reflective exchange.

H. Marie's interview

I conducted my interview with Marie in her somewhat bohemian walk up apartment on St. Laurent Street in Montreal. She lived there with her "boy friend" who was present briefly at the beginning of the interview. The apartment had a small room as well that Marie was using as a studio.

Marie was the third participant that I chose to work with at Concordia. Her text and images showed stronger interconnections across various categories that suggested that she was able to link her creative and reflective gambits, both in terms of her personal narrative and in terms of her project development. She was successful and, unlike Sharon or Hubert, was able to draw upon her personal narrative and bring it into the DJSB in a direct and explicit manner. Thus, the issues in her compositions that were related to dealing with her personal narrative entered into our discussion, and there was no attempt by Marie, inadvertent or otherwise, to avoid either issue.

Key to her success or to the success of the DJSB exchange was trust. She said that trust "was fundamental to how well it worked . . . I had this trust. It was a choice. I always felt

like I had a choice and I had control . . . but I was always being supported. For me the most important thing is to make a connection . . . then there's a sort of trust and then you can do the work together." Hubert had engaged in a sort of struggle with me for control. Sharon, while she had noted the importance of trust, was unable to trust me enough at the time of the DJSB to carry through on that and make a topic, which was key to her work, part of the discussion.

As well as Marie's ability to link her personal narrative to the compositions she developed, what had been striking for me about my exchange with Marie was that it had worked so well because it appeared to have been driven partly by my interventions. Marie expressed slightly different reactions to this observation over the course of the interview. At first, when I asked her if my intervention marked a turning point for her she said: "I thought it wasn't so much of a turn around because I had been working on the idea of Mrs. G., for quite a while . . . Your intervention was more like . . . a door opening a crack so you start walking towards it."

Later however, after we had discussed a number of things we came back to her memory of what had happened, and mine, as represented in the case study. She said: "Well, it struck me while I was writing about the spiral (metaphor for the DJSB) . . . how to me it was such a spiral thing and everything was working towards one goal all of the time. But then I went back and read all my notes over and you had seen it too . . . it was like an about face . . . then I thought about it and thought it was quite an about face."

In discussion with me she tried to reconcile her perception that she had come to something herself but realized that I had played a part in that. She said: "I think that in the context of the short time that we did the dialogue it was an about face, but in the context of my life history it was a spiraling, a coming to the center, the core of what needed to be said. Even though part of it was a spiral . . . towards something that had been in my head for a long time, without the dialogue it wouldn't have come out, and not in that satisfactory manner, as it certainly was for me, or maybe not at all."

In all of this what seemed important was that an issue from her personal narrative that had been with her for a long time came to fruition because of the circumstances of the DJSB. However, Marie put her finger on another aspect of the process in talking about the issue in relationship to her own students. She said: "Some students are more open than others . . . It takes longer for some to come around." In her case, in terms of her readiness to deal with the material from her personal narrative she said: "Maybe it took a level of maturity . . . or a level of physical time." She also pointed to the "huge element of chance" in the situation that made it work. She was reluctant to accept that, she said. In her memory of the event "it was very important that I set it up, see it as more of an event meant to happen than something chancy. I still have trouble with that chance idea." But she admitted "chance . . . did play a huge role in this." It was only by chance that I had a similar experience to that one of hers that had become the basis for her work in the DJSB exchange.

I told her that I saw the discussion around this as a reflection of our different experiences of the material. I said: "We each give shape to our own experiences. I saw the writing, your sketches, the final piece. I didn't see the rest of your life spread out because I haven't lived it, so for you it may have been more of a spiraling, a deepening . . . I perceived that you were going in one direction and then you stopped and were going in another direction. It wasn't a totally different direction but it was different enough to notice it."

Marie summed up this aspect of the conversation and her continuing ambivalence about the role I played when she said: "I want you to understand that it really was because of the connection [between us] that I allowed these things to come out, and I hate to say that I would never have done such an important piece without your support but, at the time, I wouldn't have."

What was becoming clear from this conversation was that, even with a participant like Marie who could bring forward her personal narrative and use it to develop her compositions, I had only seen part of it. Hence my interventions were based on what I

saw. At the same time, although Marie accepted the importance of my interventions for her work, there was still some resistance in her to the idea that someone from outside would have such an impact on her and her work. Even where the personal narrative of the participant was present in the DJSB and was connected to the making of the art, the depth of the personal narrative could only be judged by what came into the dialogue.

What had also been quite important for Marie was that I had brought my own personal narrative into the DJSB. Indeed, it was only with Marie that I did this in a clear manner. She said that this made the DJSB “more of a give and take relationship. It made our context more humane. There was a big connection there . . . It was such a crazy thing I had experienced with Mrs. G . . . I’d never talked about it . . . to have someone say they had experienced a similar thing was a . . . huge validation.” Indeed, it was this chance telling of my own story about a woman whom I had known, who had become disoriented by Alzheimer’s disease, that brought Marie to focus more clearly on her own project and on her own feelings about Mrs. G.; this then developed into her compositional work.

In light of this it was interesting to see how she saw the DJSB in terms of some of its technical aspects. For her, during the DJSB, her ideas were “so much clearer in pictures than in words ...The writing is more like a rehash of the event...a report on it.” However and somewhat contradictorily she said: “The writing was shorthand for drawing.” Later in reference to what I had called “a loss of meaning” in her work she said: “When you said loss of meaning that’s often where I deal with it visually but I don’t deal with it in writing . . . it happens a lot . . . I realize that it was the writing that helped me get beyond that.” Elsewhere she said: “I see things . . . I want to draw them, but I don’t know what they mean.” In other words, when she could surface from her inner processing and make her ideas explicit in language, she was able to reflect on them and move them forward. Marie was aware of the role that reflection played in her work in relationship to reverie. As well, while, for her, images came before words “the writing can deepen the image” and the writing from my side went towards “validating” Marie’s ideas.

We also discussed Marie’s experience as an aesthetic one. She had resisted that in her

written reply to the case study narrative. In the interview, I reminded her of Dewey's notion of the aesthetic: "Dewey says that the aesthetic experience emerges out of a series of incidents that somehow get welded together through understanding, intuition. As you work through all of these things ...a whole or a shape begins to emerge. That gives you the capacity to see a shape and meaning in the previously disconnected incidents."

Marie confirmed that from her perspective such was, in fact, the case. "It is connected as you explained it. It was a pinnacle experience and an aesthetic experience as you explained it now. It was really big thing, an emotional thing that was inside me for four or five years . . . I just buried it.. When it came out again I went through it in this way that I came to all of these realizations . . . It was a huge experience in my life because I worked something through consciously, visually. I could see it right there in front of me. Now I look at photos of Mrs. G., and I don't have that sadness. There was a real resolution."

In other words, the linking of her personal narrative to the making of art led Marie to an aesthetic experience, an experience of closure that was saturated with meaning. In that way she clearly fulfilled the creative reflective process that Dewey and others like Schon and LaBoskey have laid out. For Marie the opportunity to bring her personal narrative into the DJSB in relationship to her work was liberating, because it allowed her to make art in a way that was reflective and that moved her understanding forward. For most of the other participants this seemed (for various reasons located in their personal narrative) to have been less possible. The question raised by Marie's success and the relative falling away from that on the part of the other participants, and I shall return to it in my conclusion, is "what is the art educator to do about this?"

At the end of her interview Marie spoke of the painting in which she was currently engaged. She told me that it was more of a struggle to come to a real resolution of the issues with which this new painting dealt because she was no longer engaged in the same mutual reflective creative framework that the DJSB had offered her. As the other Concordia participants had not maintained a regular sketchbook practice on their own,

neither had Marie.

Like Hubert and Sharon, Marie had affirmed the accuracy of the narrative case study, but had also gone on to offer revisions. In the interview she was in a way more resistant to my interpretations than she had seemed during the DJSB, because it seemed to call her independent creativity into question. She did affirm that trust was very important to her and that her sense of mutuality through the parallels in our lives had gone a long way to support her trust of me during the exchange. With that sense of trust there was also a sense of support, yet a feeling that she was in control. Even so, as I have mentioned, she had some resistance to seeing this control affected by my input.

Timing and chance had played a role here, as they had with Hubert and Sharon. Marie was aware that she was ready to deal with her life through her art. Hubert suffered from anxiety that he would not be able to deal with things in a timely manner. Time was needed for Sharon to come to grips with her situation.

Again as in the other two situations a strong sense of the interview continuing and deepening the DJSB exchange was clear. Marie also indicated that for her images preceded text in her reflective process.

I. Emerging themes at the Concordia site.

In the process of the DJSB at the Concordia site I had engaged the participants at three stages: 1) The DJSB exchange itself; 2) The reading of the Narrative Case Study, and 3) The follow up interview. Some themes seemed to emerge out of these interactions that reached across all three exchanges.

1. Each narrative case study was more or less correct according to each participant but each used the interview to revise the story.
2. Each exchange had a shape, one could say a plot with parallels in the literary tradition. While these “plots” became apparent through the construction of the

narrative case study, they underwent reconstruction as a result of the interviews and the revelation of “facts” of which I was unaware during the DJSB exchange. The plots varied in their form. My awareness of the shape of the exchange came forward during the narrative construction.

3. The success of the DJSB was dependent on the way in which both the participants and I managed our anxiety with regard to the process of the exchange within the constraints of the site.

4. Trust based on some perceived commonality, apparent through some self-disclosure (especially with Marie) allowed for dialogue and for an appropriate reduction of anxiety about the outcome of the DJSB exchange. Where trust was weaker, as with Hubert, the exchange was less successful on both my part and the part of the participant.

5. The “school” context encouraged compliance rather than engagement especially where the extrinsic motivations of a course were strong in the participants’ values. Hubert was ready to be compliant if necessary, in order to obtain a high grade.

6. Time and timing played a role in the success of the DJSB exchange. The participants had to be “ready” to deal with the issues connected to their art making in order for them to deal effectively with them. Time was also perceived as a pressure or constraint within the school context and also generally. Hubert and Marie seemed most aware of this issue.

7. The personal narrative of each participant, including myself, over-determined the DJSB exchange and the issues that arose. As a result my interventions were limited by a lack of knowledge of what the participants had as their main concerns. Trust was also affected by these personal narratives.

8. While each participant came up against problems in their art making two tended to

avoid discussion of them and only one was able to fully enter into a process that encompassed both reverie and reflection upon the results of such. Only one was able to do so in a mutual way as provided by the DJSB context.

9. Text ruminations or discussions were perceived as following on image production. Text (writing) was clearly understood as a problem-solving tool in relationship to image production by only one participant.

10. The DJSB narrative case studies added meaning to the experience of the exchange for the participants and myself. The participants saw them as a significant part of the whole DJSB exchange.

11. The interviews, as well as leading to reconstructions of the original Narrative Case Study, continued the process of the DJSB exchange. In doing so they extended and deepened the understanding of both the participants and myself of what had happened.

12. The creative reflective art making process for each participant revealed states of reverie and moments of reflection in varying degrees and proportion. Anxiety, lack of trust, readiness and the constraints of each one's personal narrative as well as of the site modulated those proportions and led to relative success or failure.

13. Modeling language and reflective thinking were a part of each exchange from the teacher's side.

14. Issues related to gender emerged as in the personal narratives of the participants. They were not framed ideologically, and no one took that up directly though Hubert mentioned that he was a "sister" to the women in the class from their viewpoint and Sharon spoke of the "pain of being a woman."

15. Chance occurrences and parallels or the lack of these, both in art making and

personal narratives between the teacher and the student participants, played a role in the success or failure of the exchange. Where that was brought to the fore, as in the case of Marie, there was resistance to accepting the role that chance played.

16. Two of the participants, Sharon and Marie, saw the DJSB exchange as somehow healing or therapeutic.

17. All of the participants expressed some resistance to the role of the teacher in the DJSB exchange.

18. None of the participants had maintained a regular sketchbook or writing practice following the completion of the DJSB exchange.

19. The art works produced by the participants were autobiographical but largely focused on specific incidents. This was less true of Hubert who produced a “self-portrait” linked to his cultural context.

These emergent themes at the Concordia pilot became the framework for my attention to such themes at the other sites. I will note such emerging themes at the end of the next two chapters, which deal with the Sheridan and UTM sites, and in Chapter Seven, I will provide an overview of emerging themes at all three sites.

Chapter Five : The Life Path: Narratives and Interviews at the Sheridan Site

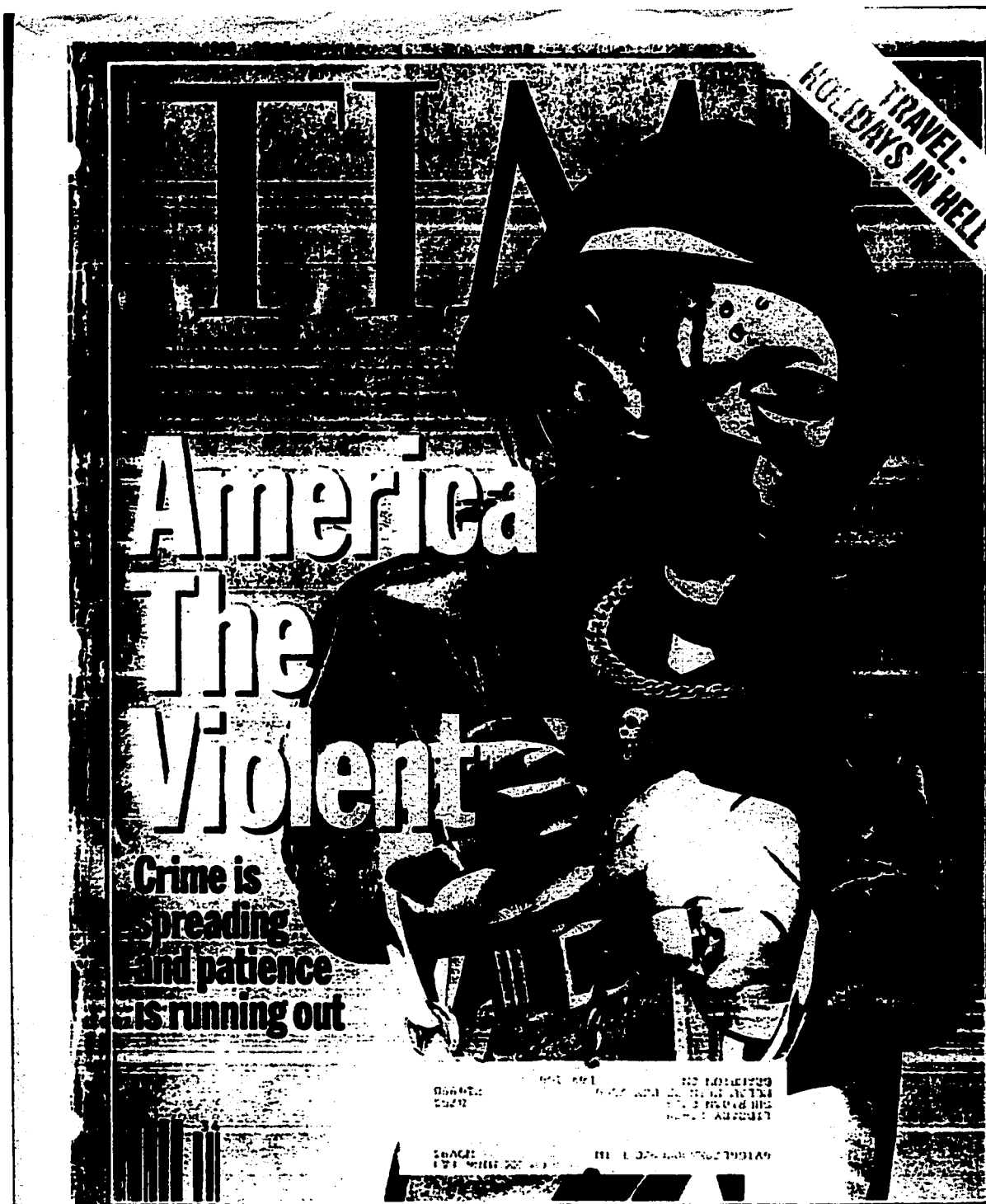
A. Introduction

At the Sheridan site the students were enrolled in the course I taught as an option in a Liberal Studies program. For the most part they were neophytes in art making. Partly because of this, I constructed the course around the DJSB exchange and had weekly sketching assignments. I did not ask the students to undertake a cumulative assignment as I did at Concordia and UTM.

B. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Joey R: rebellion in heaven

My first exchange with Joey R, about a found image (Joey R: One: America the Violent), dealt clearly with the language issue. I had asked him and the other students to make lists of words that would describe the images that they had located. Joey did so, but he also was able to link the impact the image made with the symbolism upon which it depended. This was also linked with the compositional effects exerted by the main image, a face. Joey wrote: "However, the face really pulls me away from the rest of the picture" (September 23, 1993).

My comments focused on the strategies followed by the artist in creating this image that Joey R found so powerful. I referred to other art examples and to media sources used by the artist in constructing the image. I was trying to establish that art is made out of art. His next submission, a collage that he had constructed using various media sources, like the found image, dealt with crime and the power of "evil" in the world. Joey's comments were narrative in a way. The collage told a story of children exposed to evil and inadequately protected. The evils were specific in the images presented, and Joey R saw the story ending badly for the children. Their suffering was "inevitable" (Joey R, October 3, 1993). Joey R was able to comment on the composition only directly and in a descriptive way, following what his collage showed, evil above falling on children below.



Joey R One Time Magazine cover



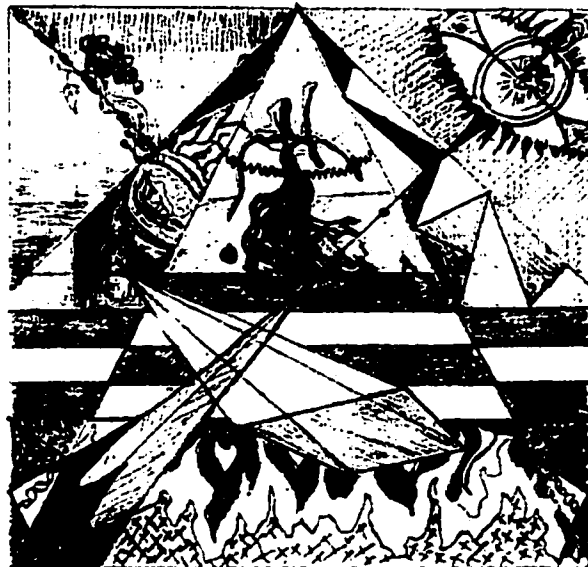
Joey Two: Rain

Joey R had not read my first comments when he made his collage (Joey R: Two: Rain). They only came to him at the time he handed in the second work. In my comments on the collage, I confined myself to noting how some of the effects were achieved, e.g. use of negative space. I also suggested a way he could have used xerography to give himself more compositional options. Joey R had also worked the initial of his last name into the work using the negative space. I commented on the letterform and left it to him to make the connection.

What mainly impressed me at this point in the exchange was that Joey R's art, found or made, focused on symbolic narratives, short morality plays that I had begun to suspect must be grounded in a religious background.

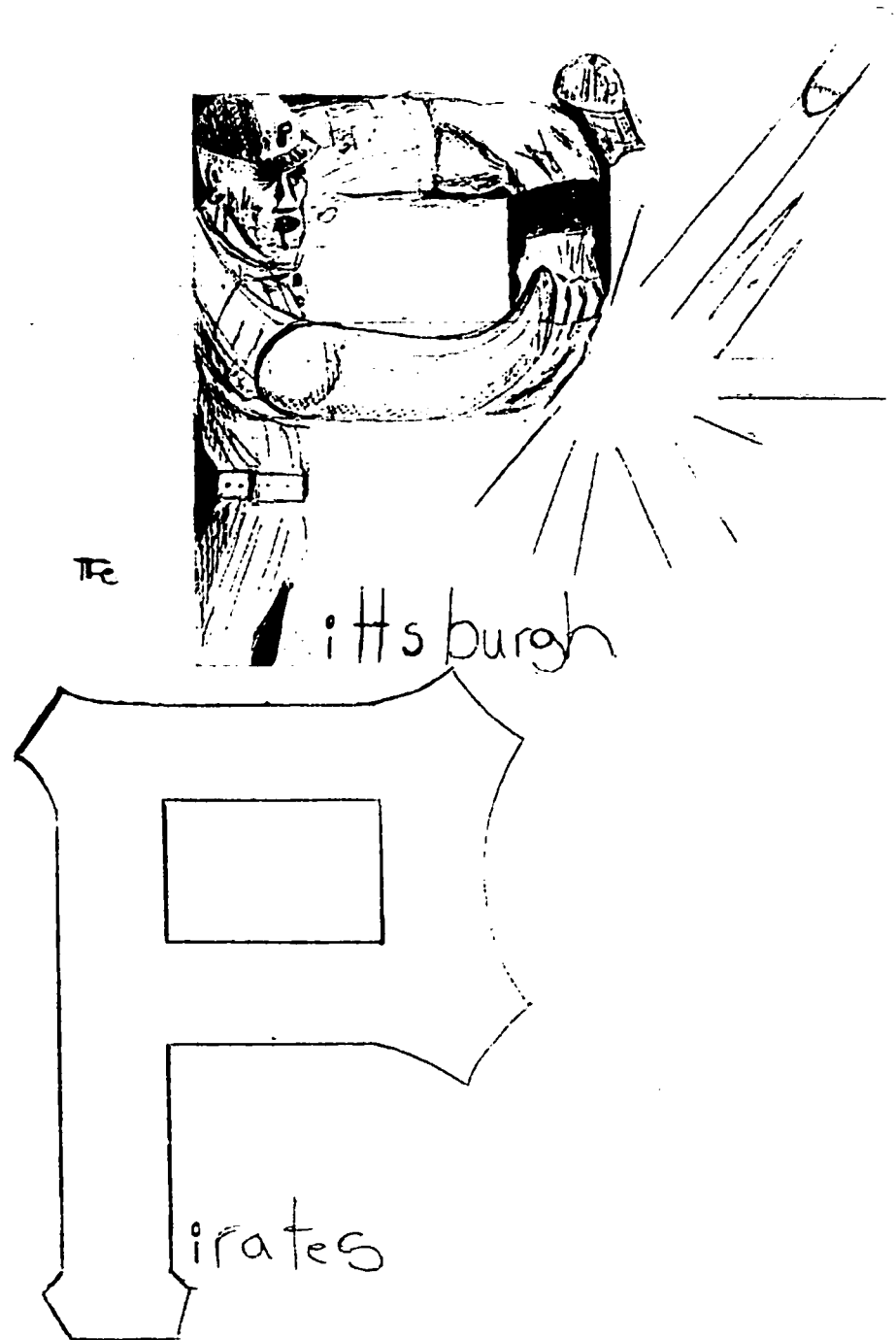
In his third submission (Joey R, Three: Vision Thing), Joey R made what I saw as his Christian or religious ideas more explicit. He developed a composition based on a triangle, which he connected to the 'trinity' of Christian theology. There were other symbolic religious elements in the work as well that seemed to have echoes of other religious or occult ideas. Certainly Joey R was aware of using a compositional strategy since he tried to connect with ideas of the triangle; however, those ideas were more about what the triangle symbolized than about a visual extension of the original image. Joey R certainly seemed to be confirming my sense of a Christian background coming into play in his image making. As well, he repeated certain themes or image from his previous composition, e.g. a disembodied eye, a tree-like form. I found myself trying to focus Joey R on how his compositional strategies and his symbolic themes interconnected. I was looking for themes and I wanted him to become aware of them. Although I did not see Joey as stuck, I was trying to get him to redefine his "problem" of art making in a general sense. At least I wanted him to be aware of how composition and theme were mutually supporting in his work and how that might lead him in a direction. Thus I found myself responding to Joey R somewhat as I had with the Concordia participants.

Vision Thing:



I think I really went as abstract as I could with this piece. I really had fun with it indeed. What I did was I tried to incorporate shapes, colors, and pictures which somehow remind me or relate to the triangle. For instance the cross (Christianity), the actual cross which is the triangle. As well as such thing as the trinity (3). The triangle or pyramid has a lot of religious ties, egypt etc. Different shapes, tones, etc gave me inspiration as far as Egyptian civilization or better yet, art. Somehow fire or heat (bottom) came to mind in thinking of the pyramids. Life in general for me is well symbolized in the triangle. Themes such as life, power, and equality all come to mind.

Joey R Three: Vision thing



Joey R. Four: Logo for The Pirates

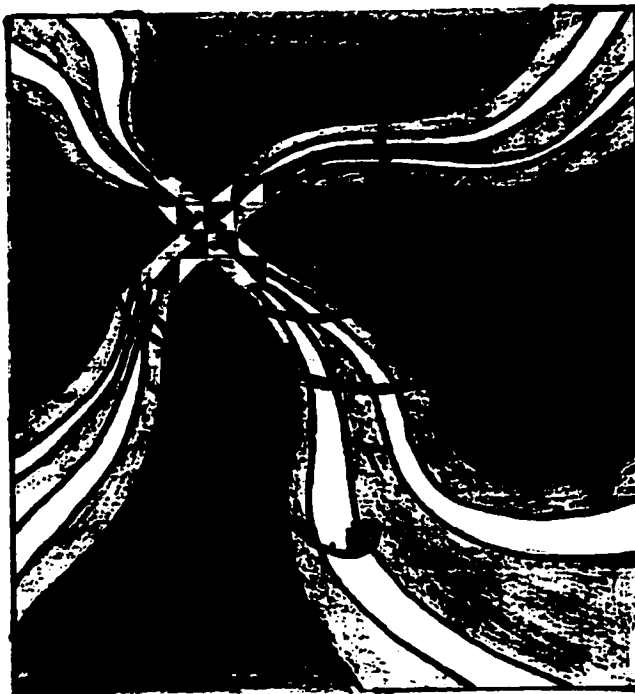
Joey R's fourth submission (Joey R, Four: Logo for the Pirates) was a bit out of line with the system that I had set up, and with my expectations of how I thought his work might begin to develop. Since he had missed a class, he gave me his make-up exercise for that class as his dialogue journal work. It was a logo design for the baseball team, the Pittsburgh Pirates. In his text Joey R showed himself capable of reflecting upon his composition and solving his own art making problems. Originally he started out to use a series of "Ps" in his design but then opted for a cartoon-like distortion of a ball player.

He wrote: "I was actually going to have the whole paper covered in 'Ps' but I was getting away (from the idea) already. Obviously it is the 'P' I tried to convert into Bobby Bonilla wrapping himself into a 'P' formation smashing a home run. Now I know he isn't possibly as shaped as the letter design but any other way would have looked to[o] awkward." (Joey R, October 10, 1993). There was sense here of Joey R imposing his own rules on the requirements of the assignment to solve his problem.

I made a number of comments about the design, and, as I had so far, I focused on relating it to art-historical examples and to compositional strategies related to the message. I had more a sense of supporting Joey R's solution than of directly intervening to help him find one (Winnicott, 1971; Rudnytsky, 1993). This was exacerbated by the fact that Joey did not have to resubmit his idea sketch with revisions. I realized that the way that I had set-up the whole dialogue journal sketchbook exercise was going to make it hard for me to get results similar to those I obtained at Concordia where there was a chronological movement, at least, from sketches to final work.

From here on there were to be a series of sketches with no particular assignment of a theme. Emergent themes rather than emergent problems seemed to be my necessary focus. In fact, Joey R had carried over the themes of distortion and exaggeration from his first two exchanges (though here as a compositional strategy rather than as a message about moral values).

Life Begins At The Cross

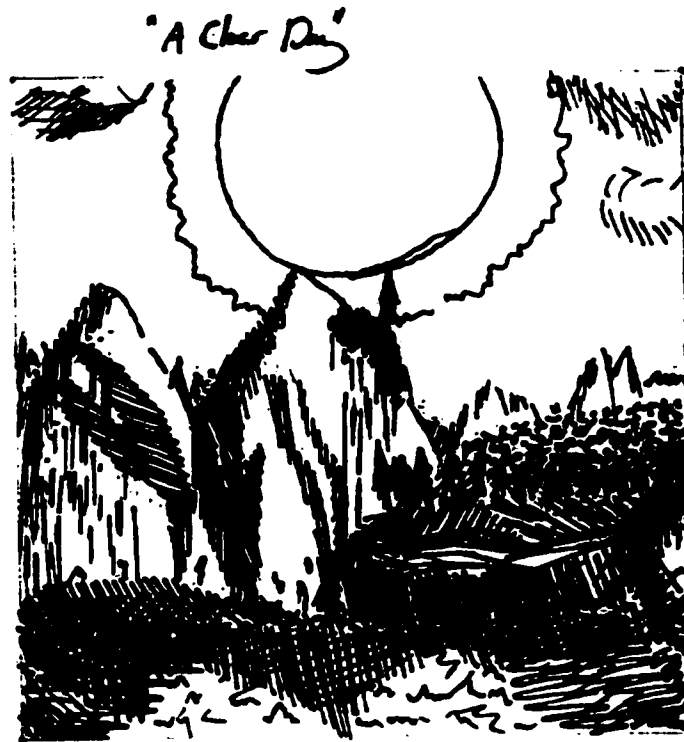


Joey R: Life Begins at the Cross

Joey R went back visually to his previous work in his next submission (Joey R: Five: Life begins at the Cross) but again he missed the class. He wrote no comments other than a short apology. I was a bit concerned since I thought that he had started off well. In the Liberal Studies program at Sheridan many students do not stay the course, so to speak, and I began to wonder if Joey R was to one of them. Even so the piece was interesting because it picked up again on Christian themes, here dealing with the cross, though almost as a biomorphic form. Unfortunately Joey R's lack of textual comment left me a bit up in the air, and as I said, worried.

I decided to ignore the attendance problem and to comment extensively on the drawing dealing both with general Gestalt principles and with specific strategies of his design. This approach paid off, since Joey R resumed his drawings and comments in the following week and kept them up. As well, by the end of the course, in his summary essay he came back to this particular drawing and wrote about it in a way that reflected my analysis of it. In my comments on the piece I was at pains to link his graphic design to his theme and I wrote, "Thus the graphic organization clearly supports your intention" (Collins, October 17, 1993). My whole thrust at this point was to keep telling Joey R how his images and their construction worked to express his ideas. I was making explicit to him the ideas expressed in the text we were using in the class and continually trying to reinforce his awareness of them. I wasn't so much re-framing the problem according to a principle, or a discipline (Schon, 1983), as presenting Joey R, via Dondis, with a set of principles that could add up to a discipline.

Joey's next submission was called "A Clear Day" (Joey R, Six: A Clear Day). As his second drawing had been called "Caught in the Rain" I began to see here an opposition and a kind of plot emerging. After the toxic rain of drawing number two here was an image of relief. Joey R's comments did not support that. Rather he focused on his exploration of cross-hatching as a way to establish the shapes in the drawing. Even so, in addition to the opposition set out in the titles, there were some image connections with previous works. A "sun" recalled the "sun" in drawing "Vision Thing". Mountain shapes



For this particular journal, I decided obviously to do a normal end-of-the-day thing. I wanted basically to us line, and the direction it is pointed as a way of giving contrast. For example on the cliff different formations are actually shaped with the different lines pointed in different directions. Now at some point the lines are set to complicated by the sky. However I think I did reach the contrast I wanted in the rock formations & possibly where the edge of the forest sits at the edge.

Overall I'm happy with it & it was fun to do.

echoed the earlier compositional structure of the collage. I continued my pedagogical strategy providing support and explicating what I saw Joey R doing in his drawings. I also pointed out how ambiguity created by his problems with the cross-hatching had a positive side since it communicated something ambiguous about his theme, “The Clear Day”.

My support had some positive impact. Joey R continued to use cross-hatching in the rest of his drawings. In a way, Joey R was exploring various techniques and compositional ideas throughout our exchange. Because he did not have to produce a final project, however, his weekly sketching did not have to move towards a larger composition. Moreover, since Joey R kept referring to certain themes it seemed to me that his “experiments” had more to do with attempts to express those themes, as if he was looking for the best way to say what he had to say. Because there was no limit imposed on him by me, and because he was exploring, he didn’t have the pressure that most other participants had to produce a final product. He could keep on exploring.

In his next drawing (Joey R, Seven: The Observance) Joey R continued to use cross-hatching. He also drew a face or part of a face that, in its positioning, echoed his collage. The issue here, according to Joey R, was to use cross-hatching to express a certain roughness and a sense of suffering. He wanted to know what it was like to be in tune with another and to know, from their expression, what they were feeling. I went back to my comments about the use of cross-hatching in the previous drawing to work further on the technical issue of establishing form in a drawing. Here I was working on language and commenting on Joey R’s exploratory drawing. I was continuing to reinforce his awareness of what he was doing. I was modeling self-reflective thinking about creative art making.

In my comments on the issue of empathy I brought to bear what I thought of as my own experience as an artist. My comments reflected Dewey’s remarks (1934) on how we understand art through empathy. All of this I saw as building a capacity for creative reflection in Joey R.

A high-contrast, black and white graphic illustration of a person's face. The image is characterized by dense, dark, vertical and diagonal hatching lines that create a textured, almost abstract appearance. The face is partially obscured by these lines, with the right side (viewer's left) being more heavily shadowed and textured. The left side (viewer's right) shows more of the face's features, including a prominent nose and a dark, possibly closed mouth. The overall effect is one of intense emotion or a somber, dramatic expression.

Of the things we cannot know what it is like to feel what we deserve. Something I agree that goes the best way to feel the way we feel right about our world today.

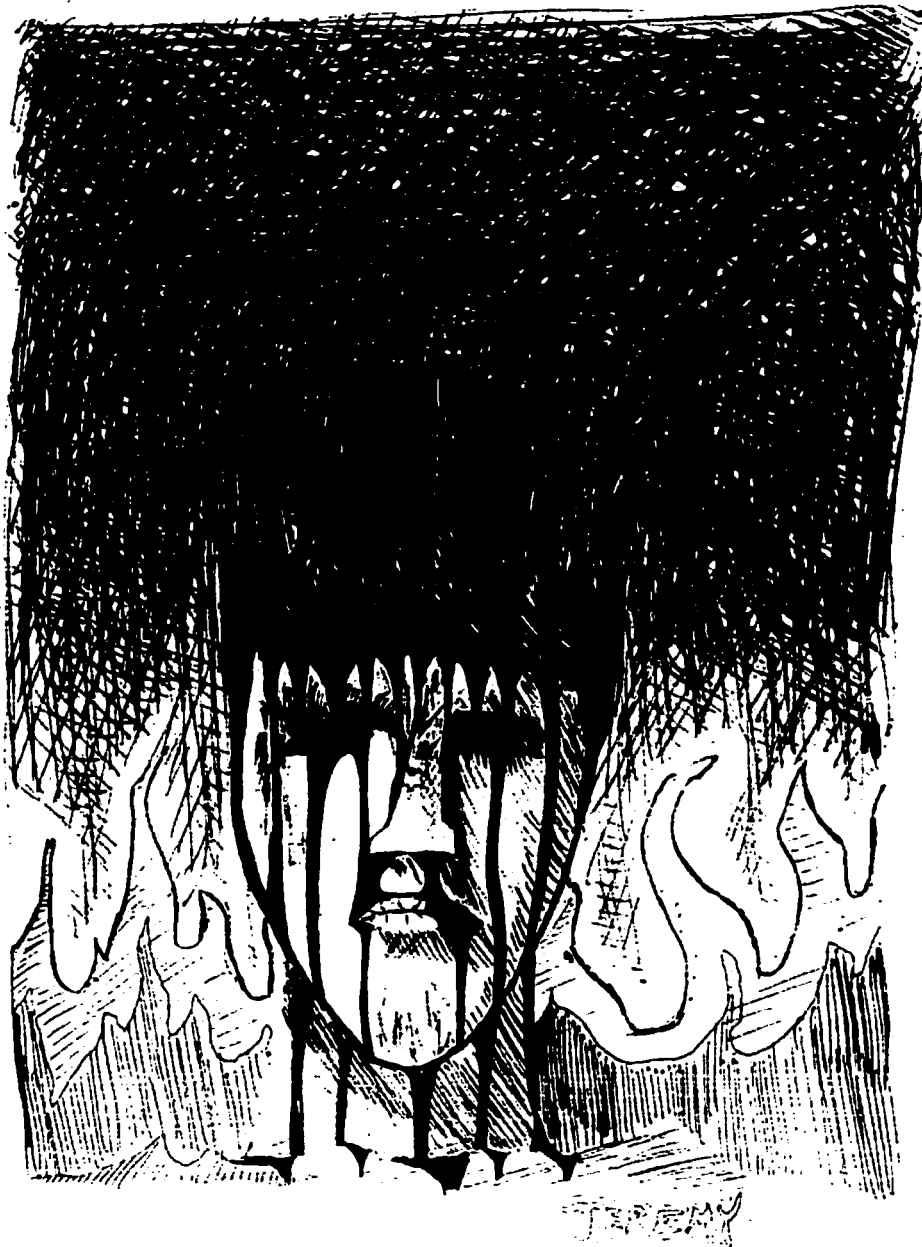
193

I was vaguely aware of how my own understanding of these issues was influenced by working with models in a portrait series I had done some years before, and with my studies using Nicoliades' text, The Natural Way to Draw (1969). There were stories here but I did not surface them directly. I wondered if the question of empathy was coming up because of the dialogue journal sketchbook process. Did it have something to do with Joey R's own questions about whether or not I was understanding him? He did not make that a direct issue, but, although it arose in an aleatory way, I was aware that the issue was an important one.

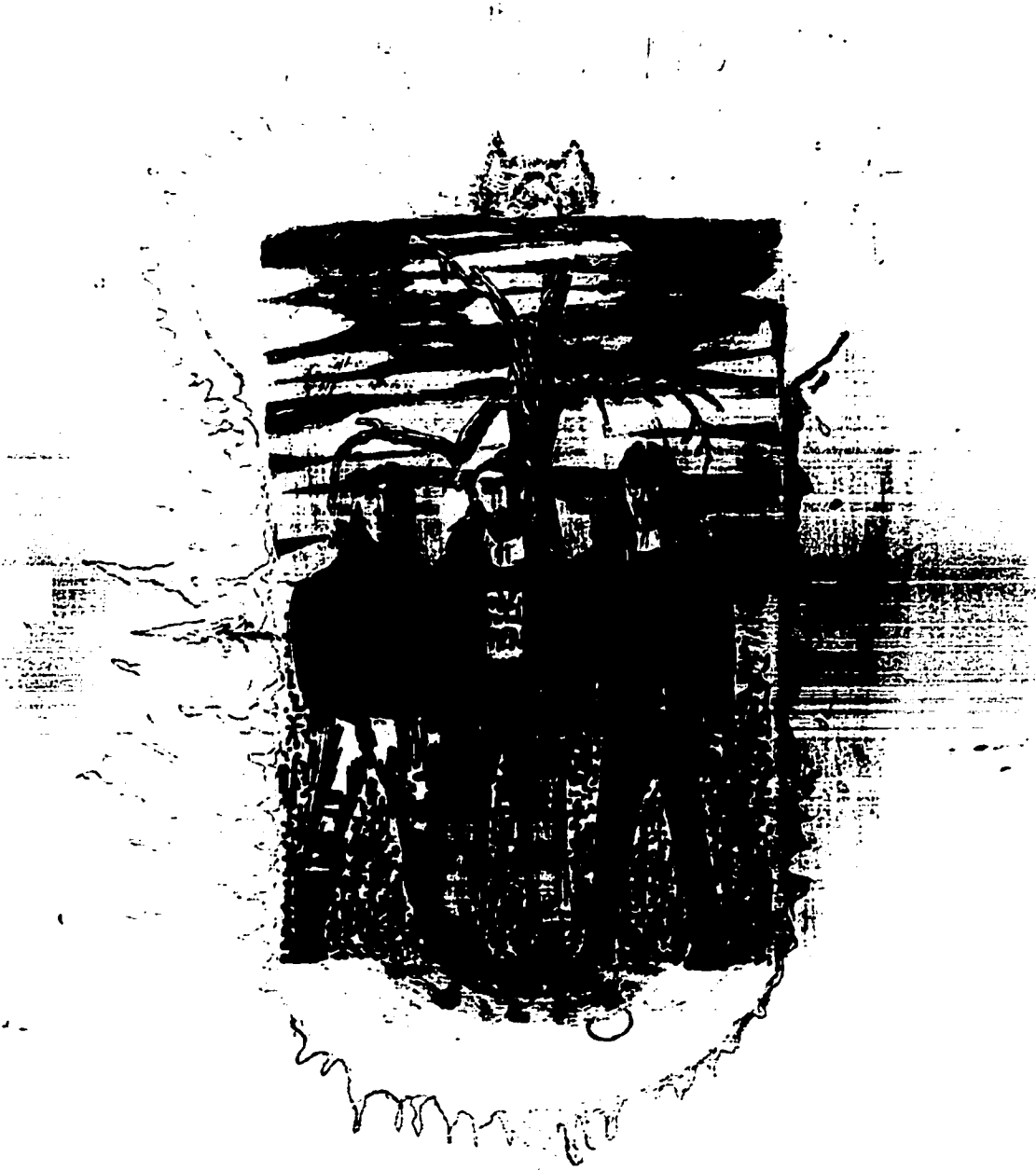
In his follow-up drawing, (Joey R, Eight: Jeremy) Joey R continued to explore the themes of the suffering of children that he had opened up in his collage and even in his first "found" image. Here he became more explicit and talked about the way that sexual abuse is passed on from one generation to the next.

This piece was based on a music video. Joey R's drawing was reflecting the story told there, and again social issues of concern to his age group. It was unclear if such stories applied to Joey R directly. In its awkwardness, the use of cross-hatching in the drawings seemed to affirm the struggle that he had to bring his image forth. As well, it hinted at the strength of feeling around the issue presented in the video. I viewed this image as a kind of solution to Joey R's struggle to develop an appropriate form, or at least the clearest statement of it yet, and I made that clear to Joey R in my comments.

In his next and penultimate drawing, (Joey R, Nine: The Raw Melody Men) Joey R seemed to point to another side of his thematic development which apparently moved between images with Christian symbolism and images of crime or at least a darker side of life. In this image, derived from another music group, the "Raw Melody Men," Joey R seemed to be expressing his affinity with the bohemian world of the artist-musician almost as an alternative, if not in opposition to his other imagery. The leather-jacketed musicians seemed to echo his visual persona. At the same time Joey R continued to quote his own work: a tree used in an earlier work, the sun and moon.



Joey R Eight: Jeremy



Joey R Nine: The Raw Melody Men.

THE
Jump



Rev 10

I think 'The Jump' is really a pictorial view at myself
is a stage contemplating something. That something is
in this course just as any course I think it is
a stand as far as where I am standing. I think it
seems to say go for it, there is still a fear of
taking a jump. The rain going down is the heart and
fire rising gives a feeling of confusion perhaps indecision
and possibly a lack of confidence. And that "Good
tree" I keep on I think adds to a feeling of
desolation for the present situation.

The vertical composition that I had seen in his collage and other pieces showed up. Here, I felt, was another summary but from a somewhat different viewpoint.

Then, unexpectedly, in Joey R's final drawing (Joey R, Ten: The Jump) I got a sense of his own dilemma. This wasn't expressed as a problem in art making however, but as a problem in deciding what to do with one's life. The image, a young man on a cliff, was unsettling, given some of the previous comments that Joey had made about suffering children and suicide. Again I was anxious. Joey R's text, which spoke of this image as symbolic of a decision-making moment, was only somewhat reassuring.

What this piece did, however, was point to the fact that Joey R had arrived at a moment of decision that was global and not just related to his ongoing struggle to find images that would express issues that he considered important in the world. Now he had come around, finally, to an issue that directly affected him and his imagery spoke to that in that the pause related to some decision-making.

This was not a graphic pause. It was a life pause and his drawing suggested that moment of suspension. I felt that I was ending the exchange process just as Joey R had come to the point where he had a problem that might lead his art making in a different direction. I wrote to Joey R that I had, in my own art making, come upon an image similar to Joey R's man on the cliff. I had gone on to develop a visual story that began with my image of a man on a cliff I suggested Joey R could do the same. I was responding to some anxiety I had about his image making wondering if there was some hidden narrative that I was not getting in the text but in the images that Joey R had made.

Meanwhile I was left with a sense that I had come with Joey R to a point similar to the one where I had really begun with Marie. I had been able to carry on with Marie, but my contact with Joey R was now coming to an end. I could only hope that the support that was represented by my continuous interpretations of compositional themes would stay with him as a force in his future artistic endeavors. His summary essay, in which he wrote

about how he had created his drawings so that the form reflected the meaning, indicated that this was likely to be. Those reflections drew upon my ongoing commentaries on Joey R's drawings, mirroring them directly in many instances. Of course, because of the open-ended structure of the dialogue journal sketchbook activity, Joey R did not feel constrained to deal with a particular problem in his art making. No clear moment of crisis emerged until the closing stages of the process. Joey R's weekly explorations remained just that for the most part, in spite of the emergent themes which focused around childhood suffering.

When, at the end of the process, Joey R expressed something of his own dilemma in an image, I was able then to respond to his problem within the context of the language that I had developed for him and the design/compositional principles represented in my comments on his work. What further art making would have emerged from a continued dialogue I could not say.

What was also clear to me was that when Joey R reached his moment of suspended decision in his last drawing I told him about my own art making, which co-incidentally paralleled the image Joey R had made. I was struck by the coincidental nature of such situations and by the fact that what appeared in the work of Joey R was echoed in my own art making. That my repertoire, my stories and images should mirror Joey R's so closely I found a bit unsettling.

With Joey R and with Alice I found myself in a different position than with the other participants. They had no cumulative goal in their work. Thus I looked for emergent themes and was less focused on a plot in the DJSB exchange. Joey R was focused on themes that seemed to relate to the difficulties of young people and children but he made no direct attempt to relate these to his own personal narrative, except in his final piece "Jump." His ruminations on the difficulties of young people, both visually and through text, led to a moment of personal crisis, but this appeared at the end of the exchange. Joey R also developed images with a Christian emphasis, something that resonated with my background.

I found myself modeling a language and a way of reflecting on one's work just as I had with Sharon. There was problem finding and solving but it was more local and led by the framing design language that I taught in the course. My comments were retrospective rather than pointing a way to a new solution. However some comments I made on technique for the piece "Clear Day" seemed to stick and he worked with those in following pieces. Moreover, as themes emerged, images were repeated from week to week. The emergence of a parallel image in Joey R's work and in my own with a somewhat similar thematic purpose was both a chance event and a bit unsettling for me. I used that occurrence to frame my comments to Joey R at his moment of crisis.

C. Joey R's interview

I met with Joey R on the deck of his parent's modest suburban home. We were alone for much of our talk but towards the end his parents came home. This gave me a sense of the emotional world in which Joey R lived.

From the beginning of the follow-up interview, Joey R confirmed that the case study narrative, "was really good. If it wasn't quite right it was really close . . . it makes a lot of sense looking at it now . . . you didn't label too much, but I thought it went really well." Joey R also wasted no time in linking his entries to his personal narrative: "Looking at it now . . . I was choosing . . . themes that were controversial, a little bit darker. This had to do with the shape I was in at Sheridan. I wasn't enjoying Sheridan a lot."

In one of the interviews that I had conducted during the DJSB at Sheridan, Joey R had told me that before coming to Sheridan he had worked with inner city kids at a Christian summer camp. I asked Joey R if his state of mind at Sheridan had been connected to this. He confirmed that there "was a lot of that [but] by the time I got to Sheridan I was in a different state of mind." He went back and forth between those two poles, the street kids and his own state of mind, as the source of his drawings. I was reminded, by the somewhat oblique way he stated things, of my interview with Sharon. "I was thinking

about different things, life wasn't too great at the time and I think so were the themes . . . It's a little harder to problem solve your own problems. Most of it was those kids ."

Accordingly, Joey R set up a personal narrative source for his choice of dark themes in his work. He looked in one direction to his work with street kids and another towards his own more immediate life situation. Neither of these had come directly into his dialogue with me, either through the weekly entries or the intermittent interviews (three over the semester). Joey R, through the interview, personalized the sociological and symbolic themes that he had presented in his sketches.

Joey R also addressed another issue, the emergence of themes in his work. This I had felt was an important issue at the Sheridan site because the DJSB had not focused on a cumulative project but had allowed the participants to sketch whatever they wanted from week to week. Joey R noted that: "After awhile you're going to pick up on a certain trend. 'The Raw Melody Men' (image) was just an album cover, something to have some fun over . . . but if you came to it after the other drawings, you could make some definite assumptions. There was a lot of the same in 'Vision Thing.' Later on when I tried to make a little bit more sense of the whole . . . what a tree means might be different somewhere else in my life . . . Near the end (of the DJSB exchange) I started to try things that could get more specific . . . certain symbols represented definite ideas and concepts."

Then Joey R said that he "was talking about very heavy things in my personal life not so much the world. That ended showing up in this last piece (The Jump). I was not very happy with looking back on my life. I didn't feel very secure about it. I was out of my teens. I can't get those years back. I was off to College . . . I didn't like it."

Joey R had not acknowledged this in the DJSB and now he said: "With a picture you don't have to be so pointed about whatever you're talking about . . . it's impersonal to the viewer but personal to you . . . [The viewer] could make sense of it . . . but overall [the artist] is going to be a little bit guarded." In other words, Joey R, like Sharon, did not want (at least during the DJSB) to refer to the personal narrative issues that were behind

his images. Of course, because there was no specific cumulative piece required at this site, it made this resistance less crucial to the weekly entries than for the Concordia site or UTM/ Sheridan site participants.

However, I reminded Joey R that I had told him that I had once done a similar drawing and that I had developed it further into a series of images. I asked him if he had gone on with that since the DJSB.

He noted again, somewhat generally, that: "I haven't gotten far enough. I'm still at the point where I've jumped but I haven't landed. I don't know what I've jumped into."

Then we began to talk a bit about his current work with incarcerated juveniles and mentally challenged juveniles and adults. He told me that the incarcerated juveniles "do a lot of drawing but it's mostly negative." However one of them had drawn a piece with triangles, and Joey R had talked to him telling him that he had done something like that (in the DJSB). I was struck by the fact that Joey R had talked about his own sketches as fairly negative, and I felt there was some personal connection in his mind between himself and his charges.

Joey R was reluctant to get into this aspect of his work at this juncture, but he did say that he had been working on path imagery like some of the other participants at the Sheridan site. In his work, he said, there "was definitely the idea of a path, the life you choose."

Picking up on the idea of a path, I asked Joey R about the Christian symbolism that I saw in his work. Joey then went further than his previous oblique references to the Christian summer camp for street kids. He told me that he "had a strong background in Christianity" and would think of himself as born-again. Joey R called himself 'born-again' because he felt that at one point he had made a personal dedication to the ideals of his faith: "For those who chose [Jesus] there's a kind of rebirth . . . I look at people on a different level . . . a totally different perspective."

Even so, Joey R said that he “didn’t really think of it [his beliefs] as he was drawing.” He hadn’t meant “it to be so Christian” but he admitted that one could “probably see that in here [in his drawings].”

He went on to talk about the problems he had growing up in a pastor’s house, as he put it, and wanting to rebel in some way. Joey R, as I knew him, dressed in a somewhat rough manner with a motorcycle jacket, jeans, t-shirt and heavy boots. He was a kind of ‘James Dean’ figure at least visually. He said: “Growing up in a Pastor’s home, music, clothes were a kind of healthy way of getting away from what I was supposed to be. Especially my mother . . . was concerned about image. It talks a lot about people who take on roles in the Church if they can’t really handle their own kids . . . I wanted to be rebellious but without going out and getting drunk or being a jerk ...there was kind of a struggle there because I wanted to be different. I used to identify with a lot more of it [pop music culture] than [I do now].”

I asked Joey R if this came into his drawing and he told me that it had: “That was something that I just decided to do.” He told me that he had liked certain groups that had a “pretty big Christian Influence,” although these were not the only groups he liked. What he really looked for were “sincerity . . . genuineness.” He said that his “role models were extremely responsible ...in the music [he] listened to.”

While I had a sense of personal issues behind some of Joey R’s drawings, I had connected that to his experiences at the camp. Now it became more his story as he connected it to his family. In a way, he was rebellious, like his charges though not so extremely. He had to be that way in order to separate himself in some way from his father and especially his mother. His way of dress, the issues he focused on in the drawings, his use of images from music videos and rock group PR images, was an expression of his own dilemma, his own problems as much as they were of a generation or of a specific sub-group, the sociopathic juveniles that he was trying to help. Unlike the character portrayed by James Dean in the film, “Rebel without a Cause” Joey R was, as I now saw it, a “Rebel with a Cause”.

Then we discussed the overall usefulness of the DJSB. Joey R affirmed that it was useful and went on to say “it was therapeutic.” This reminded me of Sharon’s response, which I found a bit disturbing. I told him that I thought that, “when you start doing art you bring your feelings to it (and) there is a general therapeutic aspect to it . . . in so far as any expression helps us to find out about ourselves ...to be more whole. However . . .I didn’t see myself as a therapist.”

Joey went on to say that he “loved coming for the interviews [and that)] it [the DJSB] gave me a chance to write out things.” However he thought that not everybody could do this. What made the situation work for him was that I “was approachable.”

He elaborated: “You [the teacher] have to have an interest. The teacher has to take an interest . . . to take time to do that. A good art teacher. . . [has] to go a little bit beyond the call of duty . . . It’s not about solving anything. [It’s about being] willing to listen, being interested, encouraging, having the creativity to keep this . . . someone out of a rut.” Of course, here it seemed that Joey R, in a somewhat a round-about manner, was saying that I had kept him out of the rut into which he felt he had fallen. In other words the DJSB, as with Sharon, had come along at a time when he felt that he needed to ventilate some of his feelings. Sharon seemed to do that in both text and image in an oblique way. Joey R had done it in his somewhat mordant images.

Joey R also noted that the writing aspect of the exchange was very important. He said: “when you write it down, you get it in concrete, you get it in stone, it’s there, after a while you’ve got it together.” That establishing force of text seemed to be important to him as it was to other participants.

At this point the interview, which was taking place on the deck at Joey R’s home, was interrupted by a visit from his mother. She was interested and even curious, but she politely went off after a couple of minutes. I felt that from her perspective I was not

entirely welcome, and I had a sense of the pressure that Joey R had felt himself under at times.

When I asked Joey R if the concreteness of the writing had inspired him to continue it after the DJSB, again he said “No.” He noted that he lacked self-discipline in this as with his “devotions with (his) spiritual life” as a Christian.

Even so he liked the DJSB because “it provides a choice . . . The nice thing is to know you can do it . . . It’s up to you.” At the same time and “after a while . . . it was fun. I really enjoyed it.”

I asked Joey R if he would find something like the DJSB helpful in his current work. This led him to recall his experiences as a camp counselor with the street kids. He noted that what he really liked about that situation was his connection with the other counselors. He said: “We talked . . . we prayed . . . we really got to know each other . . . I found it a huge let down when I came away [to Sheridan] and I didn’t have that anymore . . . you find certain people . . . and then, they’re gone. You really miss that.”

Then he noted that he “would have liked to have done certain aspects [of the DJSB] more personally . . . I think going from the extreme activity [of the camp] to no activity [at Sheridan] was very hard . . . especially about the inactivity . . . I think the [case study narrative] shows where my head was. I can see where my life has been and now I’m doing something about it.” Like the Concordia participants, Joey R found the case study narrative useful as a meaningful description of the shape of his life (and art) at a certain point. It was not a totally accurate picture because he had held certain things back, but, as he identified them in the interview, the narrative took on a force of something like the truth of where his life had been.

By the time of the interview, Joey R, not unlike Hubert, would have perhaps have been more open with me in the DJSB and would have brought more of the pertinent life or personal narrative issues into the DJSB exchange. Certainly, if they had been present, the

dialogue would have been different and I think so would have Joey R's images. Some of this is speculative, but perhaps Joey R would have come more quickly to his sense of how his future might develop in relationship to his past. At the end of the interview Joey R told me that he was off to University where he planned to study something in the "Social work line".

As with Sharon and Hubert, Joey R had held back some of his personal narrative. This shifted the DJSB to a more abstract level where general social issues and formal compositional issues became to center of the exchange. This was, I believe, a problem, for what was driving Joey R in his explorations in the DJSB was the personal narrative in which he was suffering but which (after some time had passed, and after his reading of the case study narrative) he was willing to share with me. At that point some of what he was doing in the DJSB became much clearer and opened up a door for further dialogue; however the DJSB was over for both of us.

In the interview process Joey R like most other participants confirmed that the narrative case study was on the mark but then began to present some revisions. Part of that was to reveal some resistance to me as teacher, and to revealing what was really going on with Joey R. This had held during the DJSB, but as the interview went on, Joey R provided much information on his personal narrative that made his work more understandable. It fitted into his story.

In spite of his apparent resistance Joey R confirmed that it was my interest in him and in helping him get out of a "rut" that kept him involved in the DJSB exchange. There was some element of trust in the situation on his part because of my interest. This had kept him going and, like Sharon, he had found the process "therapeutic".

Joey R also opened up aspects of his personal narrative through the interview that explained his images and that made sense of the crisis point apparent in "The Jump". Thus the interview carried on the exchange of the DJSB and extended it to increase understanding between Joey R and myself. While the themes that emerged for Joey R

focused on issues relevant to his cohort, he also brought forward the idea of life as a path. As with the other participants it was clear, through the interview, that his personal narrative was a determining factor in his art making.

Joey also noted that images preceded text in his art making, but that text was very important for him as it helped him to pin down the meanings of what he had made. Again, however, Joey R had not maintained a writing or a sketchbook practice.

D. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Alice: life paths

I knew very little about Alice. I knew that she had studied art up to grade eleven in secondary school. She did tell me that she was working as a teacher's aide in a nearby school, and that she mostly taught art to elementary school children. Other than that what came to me was through her verbal and written discussions of her own work and through the drawings themselves.

In her first image (Alice, One: So Real) Alice presented an ad that implied a story about young people enjoying themselves through music. Alice, as she ended her comments on that image, introduced her own alternative scene suggesting that she was seeing a story of her own in relationship to such an event: "And to replace this ad I imagined a room with teens in a basement on a couch [used] and the room is not spotless, there's newspapers, etc. And one person is handing the tape to another" (Alice, September 19, 1993). However, Alice provided little more than an introduction, much as the ad did.

Alice also introduced what I was to recognize as one of the recurring themes of her work in this first image. She brought forward her concern about the role of women in society by referring to the woman on the ad as one who had a "body that society defines to be proper" (Alice, September 19, 1993). I thought that to some extent this implied Alice's concern about her own role, but she did not state that directly.

My response to this first venture was strongly influenced by my stated goal, to develop student awareness of compositional strategies and the language in which such strategies could be discussed. I was trying to get across the ideas of Gestalt psychology that underlay the text (Dondis, 1973) we were using in the course. I did not respond to Alice's thematic or imaginative concerns.

This set a pattern for most of our exchange. Alice provided images, drawn or selected by herself and explained what they were about. She did this in terms of story and compositional theory. My responses tended to focus on the compositional issues. I tended to set aside the indirect autobiographical and narrative references that were apparent in her art making, partly because they were indirect. In the beginning of the course I chose this approach because I was trying to accomplish a specific course goal, but also because Alice, like the other students, was making images or drawing according to specific and narrow assignments that I was providing. As the course went on and Alice, along with the other students, began to set their own assignments in a direct way, I began to respond to that autobiographical and narrative material. Since Alice's references to her own life continued to be elliptical, I found this a bit difficult.

In her second composition (Alice Two: Women), a collage developed from magazine sources, Alice extended her theme of exploring the role of women in society. Here she was looking at types of women, career women, glamorous women, housewives, mothers: "I am reflecting on the types of women in our society" (Alice, September 21, 1993). She was at some pains to suggest that all of these women, though they were differentiated by social standards were, finally, the same. Although there was no clear story here, each of these stereotypes that Alice considered implied a narrative. I felt that it was her potential entry into one of these narratives that led Alice to consider the issue of how society sees women. Although Alice did not state this issue as a problem, it seemed in some way that it presented itself to her as such. Her compositions were attempts to clarify the situation as far as she was concerned.



Alice One: So Real



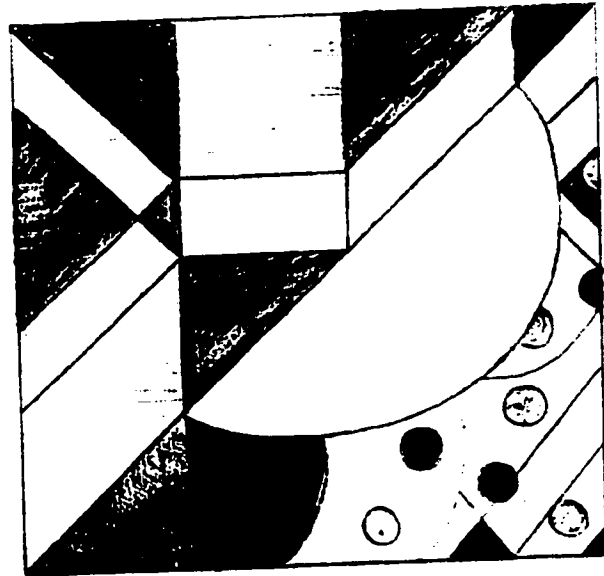
Alice Two: Women

Alice was able to discuss how her composition was constructed in order to convey her message as she saw it. My response again focused on those graphic strategies. Although I did refer to her themes, I brought them forward into the discussion in relationship to her graphic strategy, e.g. "What seems clearer here is that the 'normal' women are mostly on the left side of the collage where we expect to find things [of interest] according to gestalt psychology. The glamorous women are on the right side of the composition" (Alice, Sept. 21, 1993). I was trying to establish the language of the design theory that I was discussing in the course; I was modeling a way for Alice to discuss a linkage between her graphic strategies and her representational meanings. Insofar as I defined the specific problem that Alice faced in the exchange at this stage it was how to carry out this task of linkage.

In her third image (Alice Three: Circles and Squares) Alice was working according to an assignment in which she had to use abstract forms. She chose circular and triangular ones, setting them against each other to symbolize the conflict between society and the individual. "One side (the triangular) represents the world [which] is so structured, yet on a personal side . . . life is different,[and] . . . the curve is not straight and structured as the circles represent each individual, each different face given to us" (Alice, September 28, 1993). Here, although her work is abstract, Alice dramatized it, seeing a story of social conflict in it. As well, given her use of the triangular versus the circular forms she could have extended that narrative to male-female relationships. However, she did not do so. Again I focused on the graphic language issues although I did note that as I saw the drawing: "There is a sense of some stern authority dominating a happier, freer energy and confining it" (Collins, October 3, 1993).

In her first three pieces, which I received together, and on which I commented at the same time, Alice introduced themes dealing with women's issues and social conflict. She also implied that narratives or dramas were behind each image that she had found or made, although she did not extend that to a clear narrative outline or a plot. She was working symbolically with her images and finding ways, within the assignments to make them her own.

JOURNAL #3



If one would look at this collage one would be able to distinguish the
 on the one hand it represents the world as complex, yet so simple,
 is so structured, yet on a personal side it is life as different, it has
 different perspectives for each individual, each one has his own (own)
 texture. Since this collage is made of not changed and structured as the
 the order represents each one of them, each different face and color, yet,
 on the personal side there is a common language and the same
 structure within it, the homogeneous thought where that society is all
 the same, yet the face, life is made to be different, society is made to be
 different, yet the same.

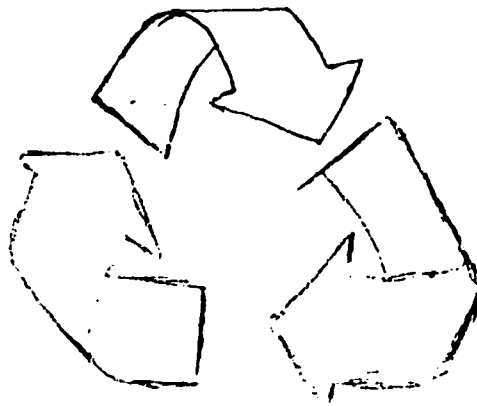
Alice Three: Circles and Squares

While she did not actually state her themes as problems there was the strong implications that they were such for her, or as with Joey R, for her contemporaries.

I was casting myself as the teacher, focused on the course objectives though aware of the other issues. Now, however, as I reflect on this early part of our dialogue exchange, I think that I could have been more pro-active in pushing Alice into some clearer exploration of her interest in the roles of women in society. Later my observation was that she continued to focus on her role as a woman, but in terms of her inner life. I found myself open to that and encouraged it. However, I did not come back to the social and political issues that Alice had first raised, albeit indirectly. If I had pushed her a bit more on those issues our dialogue would have moved, I believe, in a different direction.

From some viewpoints my relatively non-interventionist approach as a teacher does raise some concerns about the politics of gender awareness on the part of a male teacher (myself in this case) in an art education class with female students. I believe that the ultimate results of our dialogue were positive but they could have been different, had I made a different move at this point in our dialogue. At that time, my repertoire (Schon, 1983) was somewhat limited vis-à-vis the feminist view of art education. In the months following this exchange I read more in the literature of feminist art-education (Sacca, 1989; Betterton, 1987; Garber, 1990; Hicks, 1990; Boettger, 1994; Rosser, 1994), and I began to see the situation with Alice a bit differently than I had while I was working with her.

The next assignment, which involved reproducing a corporate logo, was a bit flat. The exchange was reduced to discussion of graphic strategies on both our parts. However Alice did choose a logo (Alice Four: Logo for Recycle etc.) that focused on ecological responsibility, a fact that was consistent with her social concerns and with what she later expressed as her love of nature (Alice, October 18, 1993). As well, I was using this logo exercise as a preparation for a more personal one in which the students were to design a logo that represented themselves.



The recycle symbol is in an A formation it could represent for "always" recycle. there are 3 arrows which can represent the 3 "R's" REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE. ALSO gives a feel for the number '0' because the arrows give a circular feeling to it.

ABC // Δ
□ ○ Δ Δ Δ

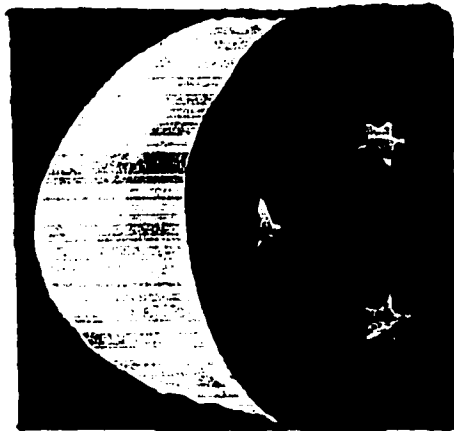
Alice Four: Logo for Recycle etc.

I had started the students at the Sheridan site with a found image, and then they went to a collage of found images. After that they had to draw an abstract design using simple forms. Following that they had to find a logo that already existed that made use of simple graphic shapes. At this point they could begin to personalize the process by designing a logo that represented themselves.. Following that I intended to turn them loose, and within certain limits allow the students to generate images that reflected their own interests. Right from the start I thought that Alice had been expressing her own interests, a fact that I had, to some extent, been ignoring because she expressed these only indirectly. On the one hand, there was a kind of plot, or shape to this exchange, which reflected a curriculum; on the other hand there was a dialogue between Alice and me that was taking shape.

In the next exchange Alice presented a personal logo, one that represented her (Alice: Five: Personal Logo). As she did so she seemed to refer to narratives behind the image. She chose to use the moon and stars “because I enjoy looking at the stars at night” (Alice, October 10, 1993). She made them into a happy face (viewed from the side) because “my friends say that I’m always smiling”(Alice, October 10, 1993). While Alice did not make the stories behind these images explicit or complete, she was revealing more of her character and of her practices. A picture of who Alice was as a person was beginning to emerge from the dialogue. In a way the dialogue exchanges seemed to provide opportunities for Alice to open up her life to me, as her interlocutor, in an elliptical and episodic manner.

In her references to the moon, Alice was also carrying on her thematic interest in women’s issues; however, she seemed somewhat oblivious of the symbolism’s implications. In my response I became more direct around the issue of feminism. I pointed out some of the traditional feminine association with the moon and indicated other material that Alice might consult that would allow her to amplify her theme. I was aware that her images and her comments reflected a questioning of her role as a woman in the world and I was beginning to point her to some of the sources of what I would now call “eco-feminism,” e.g. goddess study, that I thought she might find helpful.

JOURNAL# 45



This moon is a symbol of me. The reason is because I enjoy looking at the stars at night. I love looking at night and always having something along with me. Cool wind whispering my name and my hair blowing. The other reason why this is so significant is because if you turn it side ways it looks like a smiling face and a lot of my friends say that I'm always smiling.

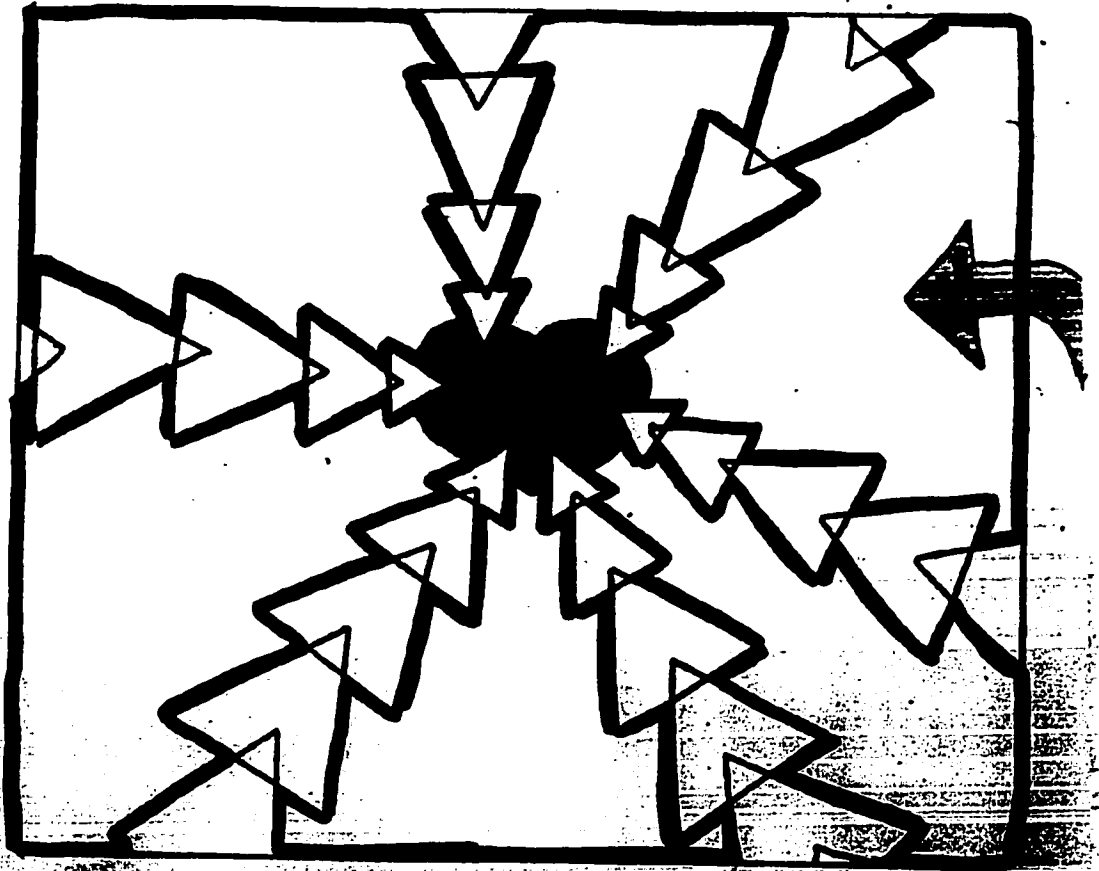
Alice Five: Personal Logo

Yet Alice had never stated a problem here in any direct way. She seemed merely to be working up her images out of her life and her immediate concerns. There was a continuing sense of Alice trying to sort out her ideas, her sensibility. I was aware of that and found myself trying to nurture that even as I focused on the “design” theory. Certainly Alice’s move to more direct autobiographical referencing in her art making seemed significant to me. It laid claim to her image-making in a manner that I was concerned to reinforce.

In her next image Alice, and the other students in the class, were on their own. My only restriction on their image making was to ask them to work within a drawn frame on the pages of their sketchbooks. I did this because I wanted to be able to continue to use what they produced on their own as a way of referring to the design principles that we were discussing in the classes. I was not trying to help them solve specific problems. I was rather trying to get them to adopt a certain kind of language and a disciplined way of talking about their art images. Whatever was cumulative in what I was doing would show up, not in modifications of each specific image, but in the students’ capacity to discuss the links between the meaning of their images and the graphic strategies that they had adopted. This was a mark of the retrospective position in which my comments stood to their image making as they went from image to image each week. At the same time I had some hopes that by giving the students greater freedom in choosing their motifs they would begin to work more from their own sense of what was important.

In this “open-ended” exercise Alice drew a heart set in the middle of a roughly square field and connected to the frame by layered triangles that I saw as arrows (Alice: Six: Heart). Alice’s attention to her graphic strategies here seemed to me to be a further indication of her developing ability to “talk” about her design strategy which had as its goal the creating of centers of interest in the compositions she made. As well, Alice linked her choice of imagery to “romance or anything to do with love” (Alice, October 25, 1993) recalling her ongoing concern with women’s issues, though here it was stated in a more conventional manner. It was also an example of what I was beginning to characterize as her elliptical autobiographical approach to her work.

JOURNAL#6



IN THIS JOURNAL ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE HEART IN THE CENTRE TO BE THE FOCAL POINT. ONE REASON THE EYE ATTRACTS TO THE HEART IS ALSO THE COLOUR OF THE HEART. RED IS VERY STRONG UNLIKE THE BLUE COLOUR WHICH IS SOFT TO THE EYE. THE TRIANGLES ALSO GIVES A DIRECTION TO GO TOWARDS THE HEART, BECAUSE OF THE OVER LAPPING, THE EYE FOLLOWS TO THE NEXT TRIANGLE GOING TOWARDS THE HE. IN THE LEFT HAND CORNER THERE IS NO OBJECT IT IS EMPTY WHI EYE IS NOT ATTRACTED TO IT SO THE EYE CONTINUES TO SEE THE IF ONE LOOKS AT THE NEGATIVE SPACE ONE COULD SEE THE I OF A LEAF (DIRECTED WHERE ARROW IS.) ~~THE~~. THE REASON F THE HEART REPRESENTS ME BECAUSE I LOVE ROMANCE OR AN

Alice Six: Heart

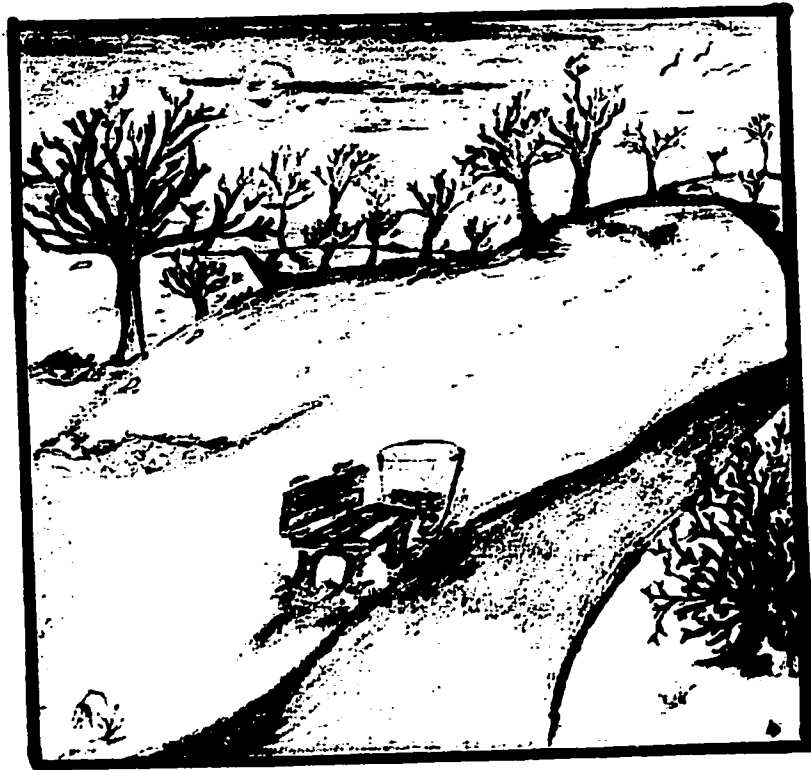
Here, as was my practice, I responded to Alice's graphic strategy, and did not try to open up the issues, social, political and autobiographical, suggested by the word "romance."

In her next two pieces, which were fairly elaborately drawn sketches, Alice brought forward her autobiographical concerns, her understated stories more clearly. She included images of herself in her compositions and she seemed to be creating generalized images by which she could give her life a shape, a meaning.

This was clearly evident in the first of the two which was a small landscape showing a road or path moving back through the space to the horizon (Alice: Seven: The Path). The image of a small human being was just visible on the back section of the path and Alice's text explained that image represented her. Her life, like the path, was full of ups and downs as she moved from one situation to the next. Her life, in other words, could be seen as a journey, an image that gave shape to what she seemed to perceive as her aleatory movement from one situation to the next

I thought that this step by Alice in image making was quite significant. If I could characterize Alice's problem as "How can I represent my life as a woman today?" this composition seemed to provide at least a partial answer. It showed her finding a way to configure her own life as journey. As well, it gave a deeper autobiographical sense to the dialogue in which we were engaged. Even though the project, as it was set up (requiring the students to produce a new image each week) did not seem to encourage the development of an autobiographical progression, yet, willy-nilly, Alice seemed to be using her image-making for just that.

My comments here, were again in line with my "graphic" aims for the course. For example, I remarked that the image's mysterious quality was linked to her graphic strategy. I reflected on her emphasis on loss in this image; she had, in spite of previously characterizing herself as a "happy face," indicated a more somber mood, giving the image an autumnal setting and pointing out that the falling leaves referred to her own losses.



One can see that this is the season of autumn. It shows that the earth is dying. The flower in the corner shows that the life is sucked out of it. It is withering. This picture can be related to me. I love to lose things especially when it is in nature. I'm in the picture in the background on the path. The path is going up and down the hills. This can be applied to my life, it can be full of ups and downs. As one can see there is a hill up front and on the path going up the path. This represents a situation in life whether the situation is good or bad. Then I'll pick up and keep walking until I encounter another situation (or lesson). If one looks at the picture the trees lost most of their leaves. To me each leaf represents a personality, a thought, a goal, the tree loses leaves so they're losing a part of them. The feel of the picture is cold, windy, mysterious. The moon is mysterious, the moon of the moon. There is a lot of shadowing, not a lot of negative space, there is a balance within the picture the contrast is not complex. There is depth. It is shown through the way the picture is drawn.

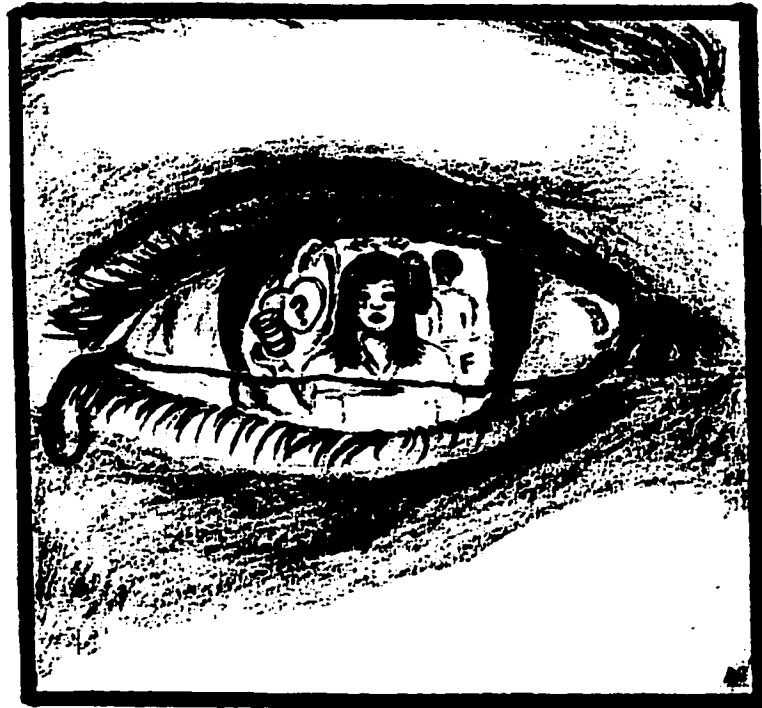
Alice Seven: The Path

This struck me. Somehow the image of the journey was connected to leaving things and people behind and to the grief that this entailed.

I felt that there were stories here in a more particular way. Alice got closer to them herself in her next image. This was a self-portrait in a more direct sense than the previous image, which had included her as a kind of almost invisible background figure. Here, she drew a close-up of her eye, and, in the pupil, had an image of herself weeping while her friends were turning away from her (Alice: Eight: The Eye). Here Alice seemed to become the most direct she had been so far in using autobiographical material as a base for her image-making. She said little about her graphic strategy concentrating on the autobiographical, still in a somewhat generalized way. She seemed, as in some of her earlier comments, to be trying to convey that she was in a difficult situation, that she had a problem of some sort. She did not state that directly but, in my response, I assumed that some sort of solution should be forthcoming. I considered Alice's reflections here on her losses as a continuation of her interest in love and romance and so a continuation of her focus on the situation of herself as a woman in society. My suggestion of a solution was conditioned, at the time, more by my own experience of art making as a means of exploring the imagination (Corbin, 1969, 1972).

The situation led me to propose a solution in a somewhat global manner. I recommended that she go into the world that she was creating in her imagination, and that through more image making she would learn to deal with her inner life, e.g. her sense of loss, of failure etc. I reaffirmed what she was already doing, giving shape or meaning to her life by making art. In this I did not bring forward any specifics from my own art making, but I was expressing my own beliefs in the homeopathic virtues of all arts insofar as they allow us to configure our human existence through their images and the power of composition. In her own way, Alice was doing just that. I wanted to draw her attention to that fact and reinforce her practice. My reliance on this approach was conditioned by the facts that at the time I was working on a series of gouaches based on such an imaginable exploration.

NOV 1973



The reason I chose an eye is because one would say that the eye is the window to the soul. This is my eye inside is what people cannot see but this is how I feel. The tree can be represented for happiness and sadness. In this picture it represents sadness. I am in the eye I see myself alone my friends are going the other way. The tree in the back ground shows the love of nature, yet it is a tree that is dying. I don't know what I feel even though there is negative space it is also created but in a lighter shade unlike the darker shading. The F beside me is a symbol of failure. I'm very pessimistic which ever though I try to be optimistic the negative feelings seem to over come the positive. The shading is in balance it shows depth. It shows things this is how I believe what you see

Alice Eight: The Eye

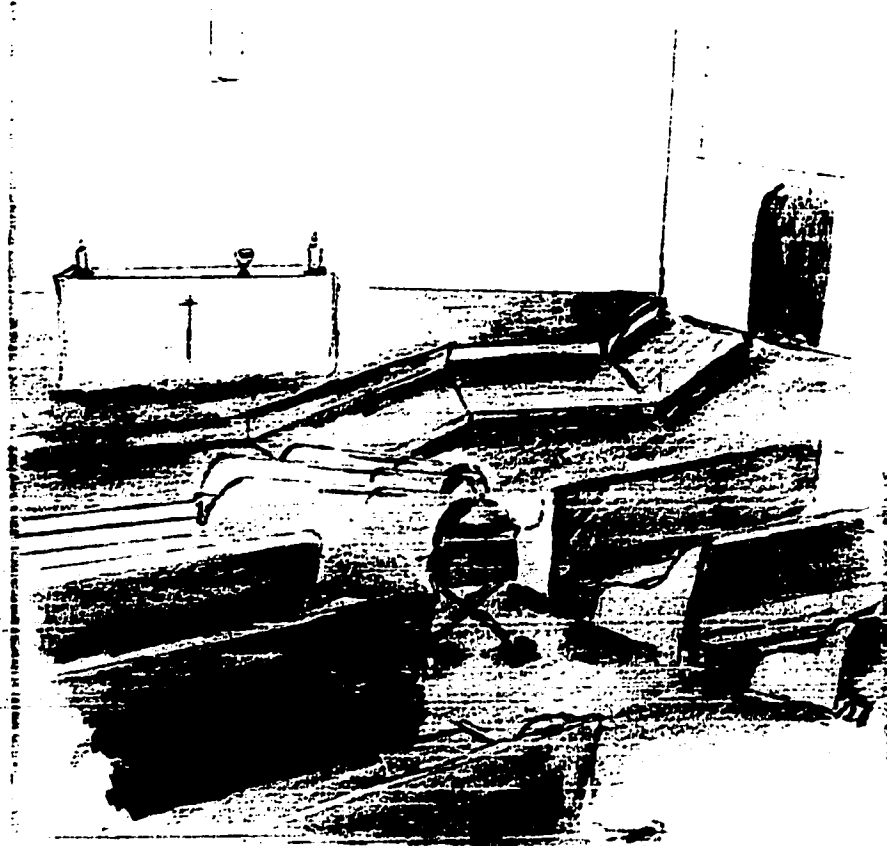
I was reading Hillman (1976) and Corbin (1969, 1972), who had written about “imaginable worlds” and I was trying to do just what I recommended to Alice. My own “repertoire” as Schon would call it, or my own stories (Carter, 1992; Connelly and Clandinin, 1994) were in action here though I did not, as I had in some other circumstances, bring them forward directly.

Even so, these two exchanges seemed to reveal both the essence of Alice’s image-making and give shape to our dialogue. While we both focused much of the time on explicating graphic strategies, in fact Alice was seeking, through her sketches, a way to configure her life. She was working, through her art making, in an effort to find a solution to a larger problem: “What was her life all about?” I was there, as her interlocutor, to reinforce this process and to draw her attention to what she was doing at what I saw as strategic intersections. Her ability to link her design strategies to her making of images that represented her life, was, I thought a sign of a powerful process at work that asked to be nurtured (Winnicott, 1971; Rudnytsky, 1993).

This conscious working-over of a theme of loss seemed to have some echo in Alice’s unconscious mind. She had a dream of a funeral of a friend, which she recorded visually and on which she commented. This dream drawing (Alice Nine: Dreams) was produced as an part of separate class assignment, but I treated it as a part of the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange, writing a response to it as I had with the other entries.

Here Alice focused on the autobiographical, the story of the dream but said nothing about the graphic organization of the composition she drew. As well, although in the dream she was present at the funeral, she did not draw herself in the picture. In fact there are no living presences in the picture at all.

In keeping with what I was focused on for the course, I wrote about the graphic strategies Alice had employed. However, I also entered, in a way, into the story by noting that one element of the composition a door, seemed to “suggest an exit from the church, the



~ DREAMS ~

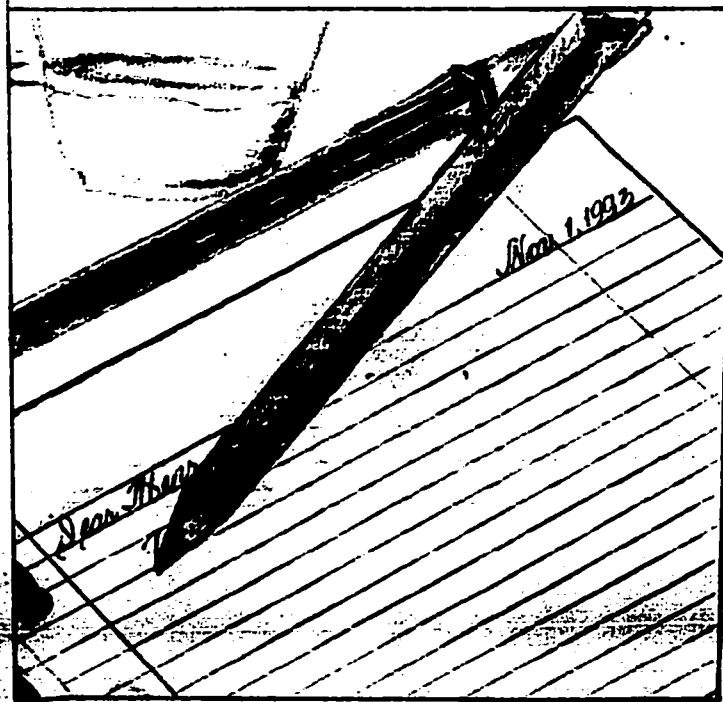
Alice Nine: Dreams

room and perhaps also the dream” (Collins, November 9, 1993). It was as if I was looking for a way for Alice to move on from her losses back out into the world of her journey. I was trying to reinforce my idea of the exploration of the imaginable realm and also trying to suggest the ongoing link in meaning between what was represented and how the representation was composed. As in other instances in this exchange, if I was not saying how Alice might improve a specific composition, I was constantly trying to reinforce the “discipline” of a graphic design in which representational meaning was linked to compositional strategy.

As I reflected on these three compositions in sequence, I had the sense of Alice finding a way to move from a general image of her journey through life to close ups of incidents in that journey. Alice’s stories, allusive as they were, seemed to me to be operating as the force behind her representational image making.

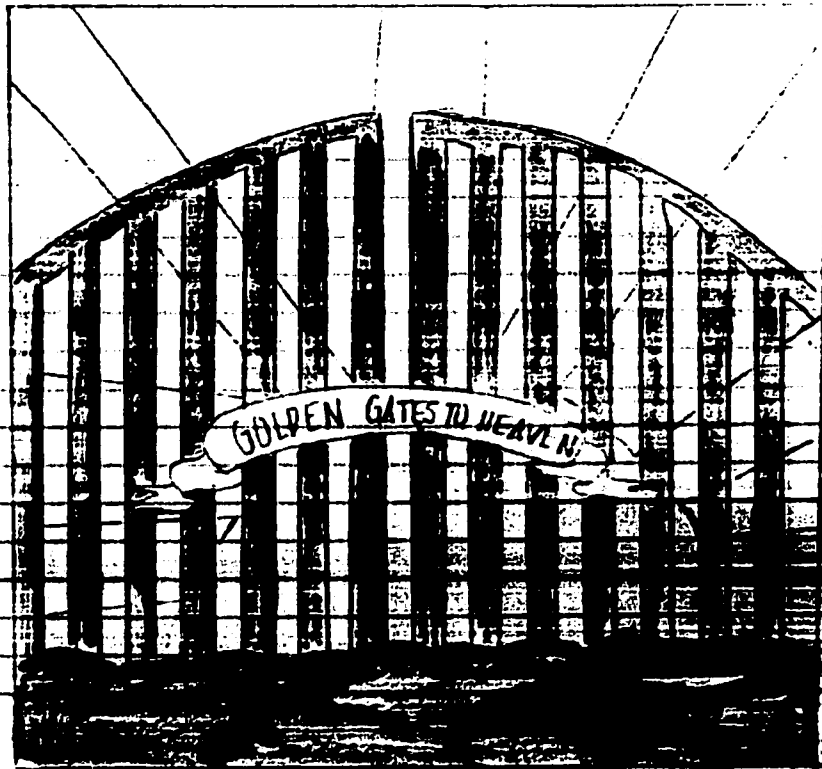
I found Alice’s next image significant in relationship to the ongoing dialogue in which we were engaged. It was an image of a pencil in a writing position, its point on the top line of a line page (Alice: Ten: The Letter). The pencil, which was alone (no hand held it), had already written a salutation to a letter or note. Alice used this image to explain her own liking for having pen-pals and the way in which she found such written exchanges to be supportive. She said nothing directly about our exchange. In my response I also avoided the issue, focusing as I had before on graphic issues. Alice was very direct about how she saw her writing, saying that the glass of water in the picture represented, “how writing can quench one’s thirst” (Alice, November 11, 1993). There was a strong sense here, though indirect, that Alice was deriving a sense of support and confirmation for her art making activities from the on-going written dialogue about the incidents in her life.

In her following (and penultimate) image Alice pictured the gates of heaven (Alice: Eleven: Gates of Heaven). Her comments here were strictly on the graphic, compositional approaches she had taken. My comments shifted, somewhat, away from the graphic to the



THIS JOURNAL REFLECTS ON HOW MUCH I LIKE TO WRITE TO PEN PALS.
 THE PENCIL LOOKS LIKE IT IS STANDING UP SO THAT ONE COULD
 PICK IT UP AND CONTINUE THE LETTER. THE COLOUR OF THE PAPER
 HELPS ONE SEE HOW THE PAPER STICKS OUT. THE SHADING
 IS BALANCED. THE WRITING IS SLANTED SO IT LOOKS AS THOUGH
 IT WAS REALLY WRITTEN BY THE PENCIL. THE PEN, IS ANOTHER SOURCE
 OF WRITING AND THE GLASS OF WATER REFLECTS HOW WRITING
 CAN QUENCH ONE'S THIRST. THE EYE SE FOCUSES ON THE TIP OF THE
 PENCIL BECAUSE THE LEAD LOOKS LIKE A POINT WHICH LETS THE EYE
 FOLD.

Alice Ten- The Letter



HERE I DRAW THE GATES TO HEAVEN. THE SIGN LOOKS AS THOUGH
IT IS STICKING OUT FORWARDS. THE LINES ARE SHOWN THAT LIGHT
IS COMING OUT. & ONE IS OUT OF DARKNESS. THE EYE LOOKS TOWARDS
THE SIGN BECAUSE THE DIRECTION OF THE SIGN ATTRACTS THE EYE.

Alice eleven: Gates of Heaven

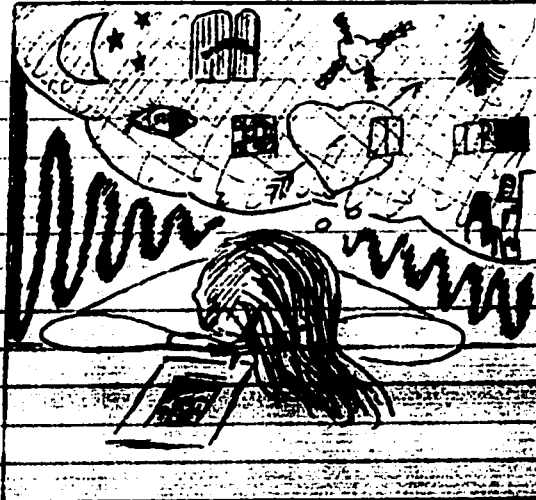
meaning of the image. In keeping with my desire to reinforce Alice's use of the imaginable world, I remarked on the apropos nature of the image for ending a journey, in this case, the journey of the exchange between us. This image also seemed to echo Alice's earlier dream in which she saw the coffins of her three friends. It was as if there was some kind of resolution to that loss, in this image. Of such things, however, Alice wrote nothing.

We were now at the end of our dialogue journal sketchbook exchange. As with the other participants, I wanted some kind of reflection from Alice on the process. In her case this came in the form of a sort of dream drawing (Alice Twelve: Summary Drawing). Once again she pictured herself in the composition. Above her head she sketched small images representing the components of the course. This image seemed consistent with her previous journey and eye drawings. As in those cases her image was a part of the composition. As well, the other elements (images) seemed to represent the contents of her thoughts (imagination).

Characteristically her commentary combined autobiographical references with brief discussions of graphic strategy. In a way the sketchy images of the "dream" summarized the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange much like a table of contents. It linked them together in a "cloud" leaving it to my memory, and hers, to sort them out into the sequence in which they had originally appeared.

Her comments also reflected on the exchange itself. She pointed out that it was a way for the teacher and student to get to know each other better, as they must in any process of mutual self-reflection. Moreover, she said, the exchange helped her to learn to think more clearly about her art making. Overall the dialogue was something which she enjoyed because it allowed her to focus on something she loved-drawing. While these changes marked a kind of growth in her consciousness there was no sense of her being aware of any turning-point in the exchange or of some specific element which I had brought to bear that helped her solve a "problem". The outcome was more general from her point of view.

IN CLASS.
NOVEMBER 31.



In this picture the person in the picture is me. The class was in the morning and I've been going to sleep late. So I've been tired. And as I am putting my head down I remember alot of activities I've done in the class, such as negative space, shade, to contrast etc. I've also learned a bit about myself as well. Yet, the picture of the activities I've done is not as clear as it should be. The interviews helped me understand a bit and help me to see what I should be seeing. Also, this course lets the individual think critically as they see something outside or at a picture. I enjoyed the course it gave a chance for the student and teacher to get to know each other. The waves help the eye to look at me and the dream. And it shows I'm almost as the same wave lengths as some of my colleagues. ~~The course is~~ It also shows how much I love to draw. There's a picture on the desk and a pencil in my hand. I'm drawing good course.

Alice Twelve: Summary Drawing

The open-ended structure of the dialogue journal sketchbook activity in this case may have meant that Alice did not feel constrained to deal with a set problem in her art making. Even so, although she never quite said, “This or that is a problem,” issues that reflected on her own life as a young woman, both in societal and personal terms seemed to emerge.

While there was no absolutely clear moment when I could have said, “Alice, you are stuck and should reformulate the problem thus,” on the other hand, Alice’s local experiments in design and drawing did begin to take a shape of their own, directed by Alice’s own concerns. That shape seemed to reflect an intuitive “re-formulation” on Alice’s part, and one that I tried to make conscious by my discussions of the “imaginable world.”

As I responded, at least in part, to Alice’s implied problem(s) within the context of the language that I had developed for her, and the design/compositional principles represented in my comments on her work, I did so within my “repertoire” through a personal story of my own art making. However, I did not bring that story forward directly into my text, but rather presented it in terms of its framework, by suggesting an exploration of the imagination through image making. I told her that by making images she could change her imaginable space and she could, in the sense that she changed the focus of her consciousness, also change herself. I had stated this earlier in our exchange and in my response to her final summary image I came back to this idea. What narrative would have emerged from a further dialogue on Alice’s concerns re the actual social context in which women find themselves I cannot say. However, I suspect that my reliance on references to the “imaginable world” created some limits on what developed.

What also became apparent in Alice’s exchange with me was the role that stories played in the construction of her individual images. While she usually brought the storied elements of her work forward in oblique textual comments, it was always clear that a narrative of some sort, drawn from Alice’s life, informed the images that she had made.

At the same time, once Alice was free of the required assignments, it became clear that in her image making she was constructing a way to shape her own life-story.

The most telling image which Alice developed in this shaping process, I felt, was the one that dealt with life as a path or a journey. She pictured herself on a road in a landscape and suggested in her commentary that she moved from place to place, from situation to situation, as a kind of seeker. This image seemed to me to be a clear way of configuring her own experiences and of giving them some sort of meaning by locating herself in them in some authentic and self determined manner. The two images that followed the “journey” composition appeared to be close-ups or incidents from that “journey.” As well, Alice’s final image in the sequence of the dialogue journal sketchbook was of the gates of heaven, a traditional enough destination but one that marked out a further framework for Alice’s journey.

My interventions on a regular basis throughout the exchange focused on explicating Alice’s compositional strategies. At specific points, where it seemed to me that it would be helpful, I tried to reinforce what I saw as a developing representation of her consciousness through image making. This was a storied consciousness even though the stories never emerged in any complete way. They remained, both in the images and in Alice’s commentary, as allusions yet they were foundational to Alice’s work. Partly because Alice never brought her stories forward in a direct way, I edged around them as well, never engaging them directly but encouraging Alice’s imaginable processes that seemed to give her space to develop a general shape to her experience.

Insofar as I saw that the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange between us had a shape of its own, it seemed to be based on Alice’s intuitive search for her own shape, her own configuration of her life’s experiences. As she sought that shape I encouraged her process, hoping that she would understand that she was on track and that what she had to do was to keep on going. There was a disciplined process involved in this. It entailed being true to the representations that provided the best fit for Alice’s understanding of her life. It involved linking her graphic and compositional processes to her representational

purposes. It seemed to me that Alice, seemingly operating in a semi-intuitive manner, went quite a way toward doing that.

Of course, here, as in the other dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges in which I participated, the imaginable process in which Alice was engaged was interrupted by the end of the project and the class; just as it seemed to be opening up some new direction Alice went on with her journey.

Although Alice did not specify during the exchange the relationship that writing had to her image making she did note that writing satisfied a deep thirst in her.

E. Alice's interview

Alice was somewhat unusual among the participants in that, although she made use of her personal narrative in her texts and her images, and although she seemed aware of the connections, she did not seem emotionally connected to these. Rather she seemed to consider her personal narrative and her work somewhat as if they belonged to another person.

Alice also provided me with some other problems. When I asked her if she would be available for an interview follow-up she readily agreed. I then wrote the case study narrative, a somewhat laborious process. When I got in contact with her to set the time and place for the interview she was reluctant and even seemed suspicious. Then she indicated that she had some financial problems and had to work. As a result, she had no time for an interview. This seemed somewhat transparent to me, but I offered to pay her for her time both to read the case study and to participate in the interview. I told her I would pay her as if I was paying a research assistant.

This caused me some further anxiety because I was paying her and not the other participants. I did not have enough money to pay them all at the time, and I felt badly about this. I also felt somewhat manipulated by Alice, and I considered dropping her

from the study. However, I had written the case study narrative and I felt that she did provide a different perspective on the DJSB, so I went ahead. I paid her and had the interview. Another problem arose late in the interview when Alice started asking me about other participants, particularly ones from Sheridan and how she could get in touch with them. I had to tell her that was not the purpose of the study and she would have to track them down herself. This made me feel further that she was suspicious of my motives at this juncture and wanted to check things out. She had also brought her boyfriend to the interview, which took place in a small meeting room at Sheridan College, and he had stayed there for about half of it.

Given all of this I am not as certain about her responses as I am of the other participants. However, I present them here, derived from the tape transcript. Insofar as they show consistency with the other participants they seem trustworthy.

I began as usual by asking if the narrative case study made sense. Alice said that it did, but like Joey R she was somewhat equivocal. She said, "It was pretty much on the point." She said that I gave the impression that I saw her as a feminist. She wasn't. She said: "I didn't think that I saw myself as a feminist . . . A lot of my entries had to do with me." Then she noted that she thought that the intermittent interviews we had during the period of the DJSB would explain her "work" and she seemed a bit disappointed that they hadn't, from her point of view, done so.

She did agree with the observations that I had made about a story line in her work and in the DJSB exchange. However, she said that she saw a story line from the start whereas I hadn't. She said: "A lot of the work that I did had to do with my life. I saw a story from piece to piece." Then much like Joey R she said: "A lot of my work is really depressing." She went onto discuss one of her images. "It's a depressing story . . . yeah, the story of my life . . . It's not very happy. That's exactly how I was feeling. That's me (pointing to a drawing of herself crying with what she was seeing reflected in her eye) . . . these are my friends, their backs are towards me because they totally turned against me. I don't know

what my heart's asking . . . I want suicide [in the picture] because my wrist is split ." This she said, it seemed to me, somewhat flatly.

Then Alice went on to locate a story in a logo piece she did. She said it had a story too but then she added: "I looked at it now . . . that's when I got my story . . . only now."

This alerted me to the possibility that Alice was projecting into these works what was on her mind to some extent and not really providing me with material from the time in which it was drawn. That seemed not to be so as we went along, but the possibility was there, and again it made me wary of her responses.

Another somewhat off-setting remark she made was as follows: "When I was doing these pictures I was thinking 'Oh Man, another assignment'. I wasn't thinking what does it mean. I was thinking 'What does he want?' Everything I drew had to do with me. I didn't know what you wanted then."

Then she said that after she drew her image she "looked at it and did [her] writing."

I challenged her a bit and said that she seemed "to have stories for each of these [drawings but [she] didn't reveal them fully." That provoked a response that again seemed to echo Joey R's "I never wanted to get to the point." In other words Alice was not willing at the time of the DJSB to reveal the issues that lay behind her drawings. She said that she never did, during the DJSB, say what her stories were though in some of the interviews she "did go into some details."

I then asked her directly if she had been influenced in the way she saw things now by the narrative case study that I had shown her. She replied that that was so. She then began to talk about both her depression and how it might be connected both to what I had called women's issues in her work and to an image which showed a path winding through a night landscape.

The interview seemed to be bogging down. There was a surfeit of details but not a clear direction. I asked her about a piece showing heavenly gates and about her religious background and she revealed that she was a Catholic. However, similar to Joey R, she said that she had just drawn her image without thinking about her religion or her beliefs.

Then her boyfriend, who had been sitting at the table with us, got up and left. He didn't return, which I found somewhat strange, as if his leaving was prearranged. After he had gone, the tone of the interview changed somewhat.

Alice began to speak about the boyfriend who had just left. As she did so, she introduced elements of her personal narrative that helped to explain some of the images that she had created and some of the issues to which they were connected.

"I really wanted his input on the heart piece (one of her sketches). My boy friend . . . he said that 'the heart's you.' Because my parents are divorced I found it hard . . . It's hard for me to accept a male into my life, and he stuck around for a lot of pain . . . You can see that its [the arrow in the drawing] just pointed at it [the heart] but it's not connected. And that's my relationships. He told me 'You have it hard for someone to love you and that's why you're into romance.' Cinderella is my favorite story in the whole wide world. I loved 'Pretty Woman' so much."

She went on: "I could see that being raped . . . And that's his biggest fear . . . for me to be raped . . . He hates when I go out at night by myself and I go 'Oh Whatever!' In general it's natural for a girl . . . see it's not something new a girl gets raped . . . it's not something new for a girl to keep on searching. I can't pick that one person, I want all."

This all poured out in a rush. It seemed to be like a kind of confession and I was struck by what seemed to be implied by some of her comments, particularly the one about it being natural for girls to get raped. It also seemed clear that while she had demonstrated certain disconnectedness in her DJSB comments, as I have pointed out elsewhere, she was also aware that in some way she felt disconnected.

She then went on to say that she was “happier now because she and her boy friend were breaking up” partly because she was going away to school, and partly because she had gone away to do a soul search where she had thought “about all of these issues.” She continued, saying “these pictures are issues that I thought about but I never brought up. You never go to the point . . . I never wanted anyone to know me.”

This, I thought, showed that she had been aware of the personal narrative issues in her work, but that she had not wanted them revealed. Then I, like anyone else, would not know who she was. She went on: “I kept a lot of things in the back of my mind. I knew what they meant but I would not go into details. I would not let you know who I was.”

I told her that “The purpose of the DJSB was not for me to know all [her]]secrets but to understand why [she] created her pictures . . . and to help her in her creative process.” I then shifted the subject a bit and asked her about the theme of a path in her work. She replied that she had seen that in her work, and: “When it [the path] does end, the path of my life, you’re in heaven.”

This led to some discussion of her background. She was Catholic “a practicing but not a practicing Catholic. When I was young I always had to go to Church. I always fall back on God. When I did the ‘Eye’ (see above) I wanted to kill myself. It’s different now because I did my soul search.”

This was striking for me. Here was a person who had been suicidal during the dialogue but had not conveyed any of that feeling in her texts or her interviews. She had presented her material in what I had seen as a detached manner and this revelation seemed to bear out that perception.

It was unclear to me what she meant by her soul search. She said that she went to Québec to a center of some sort, and there she spent time alone and also spoke to someone who seemed to me to be a counselor. She told me that: “During that time I was alone so the

only thing I did then was . . . so [I thought . . . what did I] want to do in my life . . . I'm still the same person in these pictures that I did . . . I want to change my life." Now, at present, she no longer wanted to kill herself. All of this seemed to me to be somewhat *in media res* and a bit chaotic. It was as if the personal narrative issues that she had been bringing into her DJSB exchange had somehow become present to her and she was working on them in a more direct manner, but not in a way connected to art making.

The conversation shifted again and we began to talk about the theme of mystery in her work. "I don't want to show who I am . . . The circle [in one of her sketches] . . . a mystery, a symbol, even in Egyptian times. They would never know how I feel about that."

After some other examples she suddenly asked somewhat as did Opal later, at the U of T site: "What's the point of this project? Are you going to say that when a person draws or uses artistic ability there's always a motive behind it?"

I pointed out that there are debates in art education about which should come first, teaching students formal principles and skills or teaching student how to use their stories in their art making. Alice affirmed that she had done the latter. "As I got into college I noticed that all my pictures were so personal." This comment belied the detachment that she had exhibited in the DJSB.

Alice had written briefly, in the margins of the case-study narrative about what she had gotten out of the DJSB and I asked her to elaborate on that. Her main observation was that her view of the DJSB had changed since the course, and that "then I wouldn't have looked at it the way I do now." This seemed to me to be all right, but it also brought me back to my previous observation that her position on her work and the reasons behind it seemed protean at the least. She went on: "in '93 it was just another course; I didn't look at art the way I do now . . . I didn't see the things then I do now in the pictures."

When I asked why she thought that had changed she said: "I'm growing up . . . each day is one more day of knowing . . . I was nineteen and I'm 21 now and I see things differently . . . I thought art was just for fun . . . [Now] I do believe a lot of personal stuff goes into your art . . . I miss drawing . . . I think art's a part of your life. I just don't acknowledge it." While she felt that absence, Alice, like Joey R, had not kept up her sketchbook practice outside of the class situation.

I then began to press her somewhat on what I had called "women's issues" in her work. She repeated that she wasn't interested in such issues as a political activity. "When it comes to politics I couldn't care less ... You would lose my interest so fast (if you pushed that angle)."

She felt the same way about mythological themes connected to women. "I don't see it as a big issue," she said. "It all depended on me . . . If you got my attention . . . I am interested in my own world. It's an easier way "

I then briefly explained to her again why I had paid her. That I had done so seemed to have been a good idea because she said: "I almost got to the point of not doing it because of the cost and the time. If you hadn't paid me I probably wouldn't have done the interview."

And on that note we ended the interview.

Like most of the other participants Alice initially confirmed the narrative case study but then set about revising it from her point of view. Like the other participants she opened up her own personal narrative as she did so.

In this way I became clearer on the forces in her own life that lay behind her work. I was also, in some sense, made cognizant of the frame of reference that she carried that made her seem somewhat detached from the apparently painful events in her life, which were depicted in her images. She was not connected in her relationships. She felt it natural for

women to be raped. She had been deeply upset by her parents' separation and divorce. Her friends' rejection of her made her feel suicidal. All of these issues had not come forward directly in the DJSB because she didn't want anyone to know her, she wished to remain mysterious.

There were echoes of Sharon in this. I was aware that Alice didn't trust the situation during the DJSB exchange and even during the interview. At the same time, once she had revealed the unhappy facets of her personal narrative, they gave her art more coherence from my viewpoint, and they opened up the possibility of further art making and further understanding.

Joey R and Alice seemed alike in their somewhat anxious view of life as expressed through the DJSB. While I think it is important to note that they were first year students, similar anxieties were present in the Concordia participants who were in their final year. Perhaps the fact of their differing but strong religious backgrounds had some impact on their feelings just as it did on their images. All creative activity however does seem to entail anxiety.

Like other participants at Concordia and at Sheridan, Alice indicated that she constructed the images first then wrote about them. However there was less sense of the possibility of writing preceding image making because of the way the assignment was set up.

The interview strongly conveyed that Alice's story was continuing and there was a sense, as with the other DJSB participants, that reading the case study narrative had helped her see more of a positive pattern in her life. At least it had come along when she was thinking about the shape of her life and thereby had made some contribution to her reflections on that and on the DJSB. However, as with Joey R (and this was partly the character of the Sheridan site) the DJSB was finished. Alice had moved on. I had a sense of the inner chaos or conflict in Alice's life that had made it impossible for her to discuss her work fully during the DJSB exchange. As well, some of that had continued in the follow-up interview.

F. Emerging themes and variations at the Sheridan site.

Just as I had at the Concordia site, through the process of the DJSB exchange at the Sheridan site, I had engaged the participants at three stages: 1) The DJSB exchange itself; 2) The reading of the Narrative Case Study; 3) The follow up interview.

I used the emergent theme categories that I had developed at the Concordia site and noted variations on these where they occurred.

1. Each narrative case study was more or less correct, according to each participant, but each used the interview to revise the story. With Alice, both the circumstances of the interview and the way in which she spoke about “story” introduced some doubts about her veracity.
2. “Plot” as a means of comprehending the shape of the DJSB exchange was less evident at the Sheridan site. This was, it seemed, largely due to the lack of cumulative assignments. However each participant dealt with issues from their own life that became organized around the idea of a life path and the idea of making choices. Crisis emerged at the end of one of the DJSB exchanges and was ongoing in a picaresque manner in the other. Thus a plot emerged related to the personal narrative of the participant and it influenced the art making. This kind of plot differed from those at the Concordia site where there was more specific or focused “problem solving” both in life and in art making. Even so the exchange with Sharon was structured apparently like those at the Sheridan site.
3. Anxiety regarding art making was less evident at this site, again because there was no cumulative project; however it was there. Joey R struggled with his “cross-hatching” and Alice with being unsure about what I wanted. It seemed that each participant’s anxieties about their own life came into play more strongly as a

result. In the end the management of these anxieties by the participants and myself did affect the outcome of the DJSB exchange.

4. Trust remained a key issue in the relative success of the DJSB exchanges. With Joey R his sense of my interest in him allowed for dialogue and for an appropriate reduction of anxiety. With Alice, trust was weaker though this did not decrease the flow of information. Rather it resulted in a reduction of affect and a sense of separation of Alice from the exchange.

5. The “school” context continued to exert pressure for compliance, e.g., Alice wanted to do what I wanted in order to complete the assignment.

6. Time and timing continued to play a role in the success of the DJSB exchange at the Sheridan site. Here it seemed more related to the emerging shape of the participants’ life path and their choices. At the time of the interview Joey R was still suspended in time. Alice had moved on, and with time, was coming to a more positive view of herself and of art making. Time was still perceived as a pressure or constraint within the school context and also generally.

7. The personal narrative of each participant, including myself, over-determined the DJSB exchange and the issues that arose during it. Joey R liked my interest but remained “a little bit guarded.” My interventions were limited by a lack of knowledge of what the participants had as their main concerns. Some lack of trust was evident.

8. Problem solving was not an apparently large part of the DJSB exchange at the Sheridan site. This was part of the site constraints. Each image was unique. There was no overall assignment. Some problem solving merged around technique. Clearly images were linked to the personal narrative problems of the participants.

9. Text ruminations or discussions were perceived as following on image production. Text (writing) was understood as a way of confirming ideas about images but not as a problem-solving device in itself.

10. The DJSB narrative case studies here, as well as at the Concordia site, added meaning to the experience of the exchange for the participants and myself. The participants saw them as a significant part of the whole DJSB exchange because they both confirmed what had happened and opened up a way to revise my perceptions.

11. The interviews, as well as leading to reconstructions of the original narrative case study, continued the process of the DJSB exchange. In doing so they extended and deepened the understanding of both the participants and myself of what had happened. They also reproduced some of the resistance that had characterized the exchanges. In the case of Alice the interview brought this resistance to the fore even as it explained it.

12. The art making process here revealed some sense of reverie. Sometimes that was available in the text. One participant produced a dream image, the farther reaches of reverie. Such issues were less evident here partly because of the site constraints, but for the most part the participants were presenting the contents of their imagination. There was some sense of reverie as a means of access to the stuff of problem solving but that was weaker here.

13. Modeling a language for the participants to use in a creative reflective practice was a significant theme in my approach. Overall my comments were somewhat more like those I made towards Sharon's work at the Concordia site. I was trying to show the participants how to develop a creative reflective practice and here it was often at the level of the lexicon.

14. Gender issues emerged here in relationship to the personal narratives of the participants. I pushed these a bit more but there was resistance to this from Alice.

15. Chance occurrences and parallels or the lack of those, both in art making and personal narratives between the teacher and the student participant, played a role in the success or failure of the exchange. Joey R and I produced similar images around the same time without any prior discussion. This led to interpretation on my part that seemed appropriate by chance. Both participants referred to their religious upbringing with its pluses and minuses. I was able to relate to this through my own background.

16. One of the participants saw the DJSB exchange as somehow healing or therapeutic while it was underway, and the other related it to a more current therapeutic "soul search" she had recently completed.

17. Both of the participants expressed some resistance to the role of the teacher in the DJSB exchange.

18. Both participants, although expressing some desire to continue drawing or sketching, had not kept up the practice.

19. At the Concordia site the themes of the art works produced by the participants were focused more incidentally except in the case of Hubert. At the Sheridan site the theme of the "life path" emerged for both participants, most strongly for Alice.

I will continue to note such emerging themes at the end of Chapter Six, which deals with the UTM/Sheridan site.

Chapter Six: The Search for the Self: Narratives and Interviews at the UTM/Sheridan Site

A. The UTM/Sheridan site

The students at the UTM/Sheridan site were again somewhat different. They were first year students in a joint program (Art and Art History) run by the University of Toronto at Mississauga and Sheridan College. I was teaching them a first year drawing course. After a semester of instructions and exercises in drawing projects I began the Dialogue Journal Sketch Book exercise with them. I did one project outside of the research framework and two within it. Each project lasted four weeks and had a cumulative outcome. In that sense the site was like the Concordia site, though the project times were shorter. One of the site constraints was the course assignment structure that I did not create as I came into the course as an outsider, and so was under the course director. These assignments, at least in part, were aimed at linking the participant's personal narratives with their artwork, and so they fitted into my general approach to my research project. Out of the two classes that I taught, I chose three students as outlined in the discussion of my methodology.

B. Alida's narrative: frames of reference

Alida had been somewhat reticent in the in-class critiques, but she was to prove to be more engaged when she wrote about her work. Her first entry for "Assignment number five, a drawing based on personal cultural background" was extensive. She provided me with three sketches, eleven pages of photocopied reference material, with annotations, and notes on six different ideas for her proposed drawing (Alida: One: Selection. Alida: Two: Selection). Alida had a surfeit of material. If she had a problem, as I saw it, it would be to decide which idea to carry forward. Her reference material was rich, as well, and it provided a glimpse of specific places and events significant in her familial past in Northern Ireland. Certainly, located in the notes she wrote on the Xeroxed material, there were stories here that were providing impetus for Alida's work. They focused on her grandfather, her father, mother and her uncle.

AS THROUGHOUT IRLAND THE CELTIC INFLUENCE/
CULTURE CAN EASILY BE ENCOUNTERED. I AM
CONSIDERING INCORPORATING THE CELTIC
ASPECTS INTO THE CHOICE IN THE DIVISION
OF MY WINDOW



Above The peaceful ruined church of Grey Abbey in Co Down reveals one of the earliest examples of pure Gothic architecture in Ireland. The abbey was founded for the Cistercians in 1193 by Affrica, a native of the Isle of Man and wife of the county's Norman conqueror, John de Courcy. A stone effigy in the church may preserve her likeness, and could have been placed over her tomb.

Alida One: The Cross

ENNISKILLEN.
THIS IS THE TOWN
MY FAMILY IS FROM.
LOCATED IN
CO. FERMANAGH,
N. IRELAND
THE PICTURE (RIGHT)
DEPICTS THE
MAIN STREET
THROUGH THE
TOWN DURING
THE LATE 1800'S.
LITTLE HAS
CHANGED AS FAR
AS ARCHITECTURE
IS CONCERNED.



Alida Two: Inniskillen

Indeed, the assignment opened up a trove of material that I suggested could be a source for a whole series of art works, for example, in future courses. I was identifying the issue here as one of economy and recommending a narrowing of the material so it could be handled within the four-week period allotted to the assignment. I was conscious of how such material could be used in a more extensive series of works because of my own art practice, but Alida did not have that option in this situation. Here, I had identified a problem, a proliferation of material, and I hoped, through Alida's application of a principle of selectivity, that she would be able to solve that problem.

I suggested that Alida focus on her "window idea" (Collins, February 6, 1995) because it would give her the most satisfaction in the short period of time she had to work on the drawing (Alida Three: Compositional Sketch). What I was thinking was that it would also allow her to incorporate more of the material that she was interested in and it would also bring her to consider the question of her own viewpoint, metaphorically and literally. That issue did not surface in my comments however, because of another facet of our exchange.

Alida's autobiography, which was the central focus of her first drawing in the research project, was focused on her family's history in Northern Ireland. I had a parallel autobiography, but centered on Southern Ireland, and I had made use of that material in my own art making practice. However, I decided not to bring my stories around this material forward, partly because of my practice at the other sites, and partly because I wished to allow Alida a space to develop her own artistic view of her heritage. This, I believed then, was a useful position for me to adopt. While I was aware of how such autobiographical material could be used in art making, I did not want to create a situation where Alida might feel that her art-process had to champion any kind of position towards myself as the teacher.

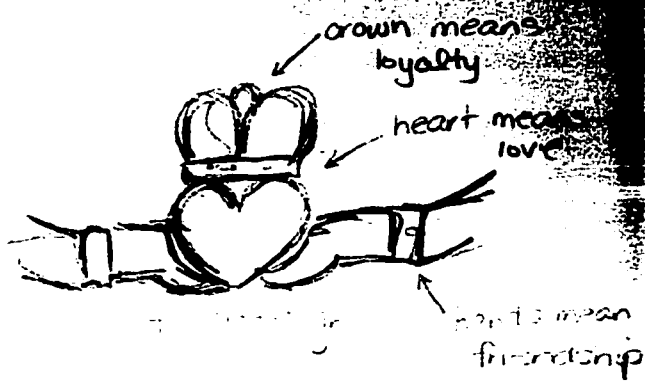
DRAWING PROJECT NUMBER FIVE: DRAWING DERIVED FROM PERSONAL CULTURAL HISTORY

IDEA #1 - WINDOW



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- AM I ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN OR VICEVERSA?
- WHAT WILL CONNECT THE THREE IMAGES IN THE WINDOW?
- IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE SOME SORT OF CONNECTING ELEMENT?
- DOES THE FIGURE BECOME THE DOMINANT OR FOCAL IMAGE?



- incorporate the connecting elements into the figure → perhaps the figure is reaching out to the world

Alida Three: Compositional Sketch (Idea One)

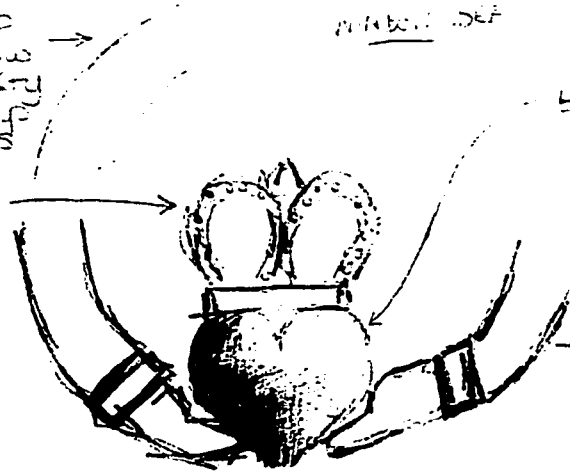
What this meant in terms of the dialogue was that I focused on the means by which Alida came to express her view of her personal cultural background in her drawing and less on the content. Because I had developed a series of pieces that formed the basis of my M.F.A. exhibit using my understanding of Irish history I felt that I could convey to Alida my enthusiasm for her approach. As well, I could suggest (from my vantage point) that she could develop her ideas further in a number of works in the future. At this juncture my repertoire (Schon, 1985), my stories, informed the process as background.

Alida's second entry in this exchange came on February 21. Here she seemingly followed on my suggestion and presented a number of sketches focused on her "window idea"(Alida, Four to Eight). In a way here, the problem of which approach to choose for the assignment, was solved by the shortest route possible, that is; agreement with what the teacher liked. However, as was made clear by her sketches and comments, this did not mean in any manner of speaking that her work was finished. Essentially she outlined how she would do this, through her sketches and her text. These indicated how she could develop her window idea to incorporate, for example, views of her family, the "troubles," her Christian background. As well, it allowed her to come to grips with her own position on these issues by placing herself within the composition in a specific way. She wrote that: "it would be best if I were on the outside of the window. This is, in some ways, a symbolic reference to my Irish heritage. I am the only one in my family who was born outside of Britain and I am the only one who has never lived in Ireland. This sometimes gives me the feeling of being the outsider of the family" (Alida, February 21, 1996).

It seemed to me that there was much insight in her conclusion, for the position she chose was one that allowed her an overview of the situation(s) which formed her heritage, and perhaps some distance that would support understanding.

THE CIRCLE → to
symbolize how
the love, loyalty
and friendship
are continuous
with no end

LOYALTY
- Love and
Friendship
outline
what my
loyalty is
to



LOVE

→ what I have
for my family and
my culture

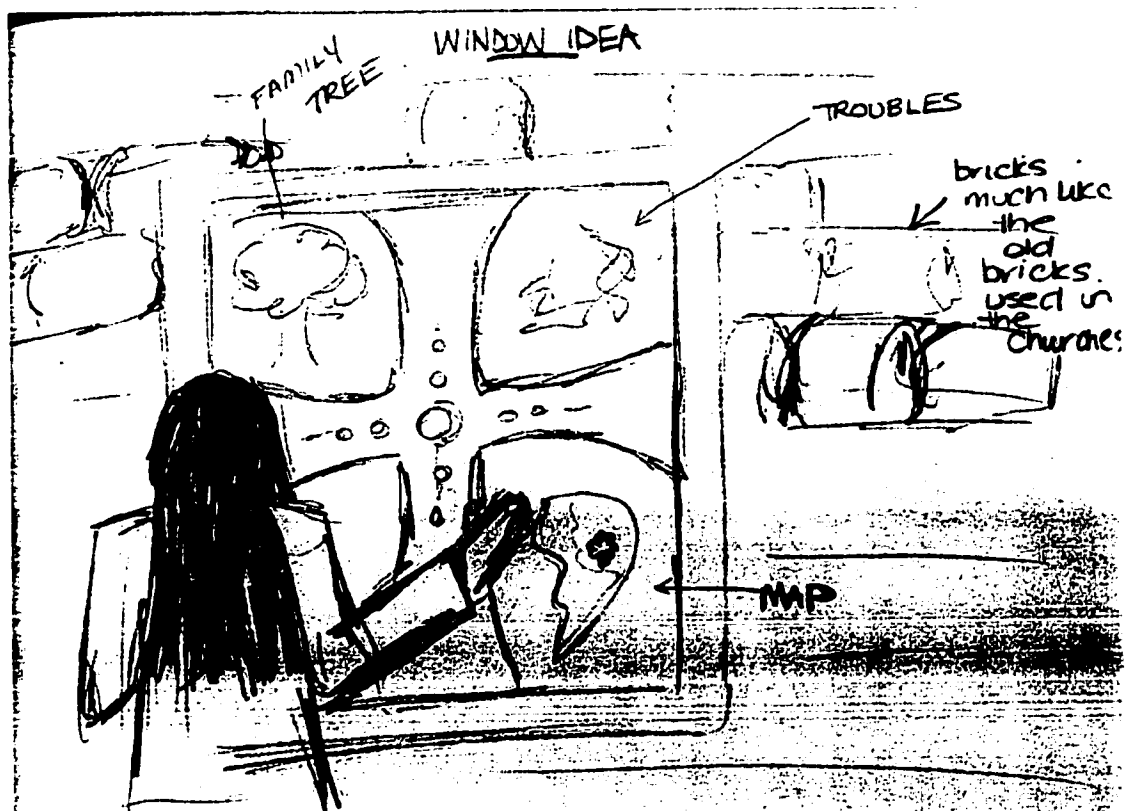
→ FRIENDSHIP

↓
between my
family and I

↳ I'M THINKING ABOUT
USING THE CLADDAUGH IN MY PIECE.
I'VE CONSIDERED TWO OPTIONS. ONE
IS TO HAVE THE CLADDAUGH ON MY
WRIST AS A BAND/ BRACELET. THE OTHER
OPTION THAT I HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING
IS TO USE THE CLADDAUGH AS A FRAMING
ELEMENT.

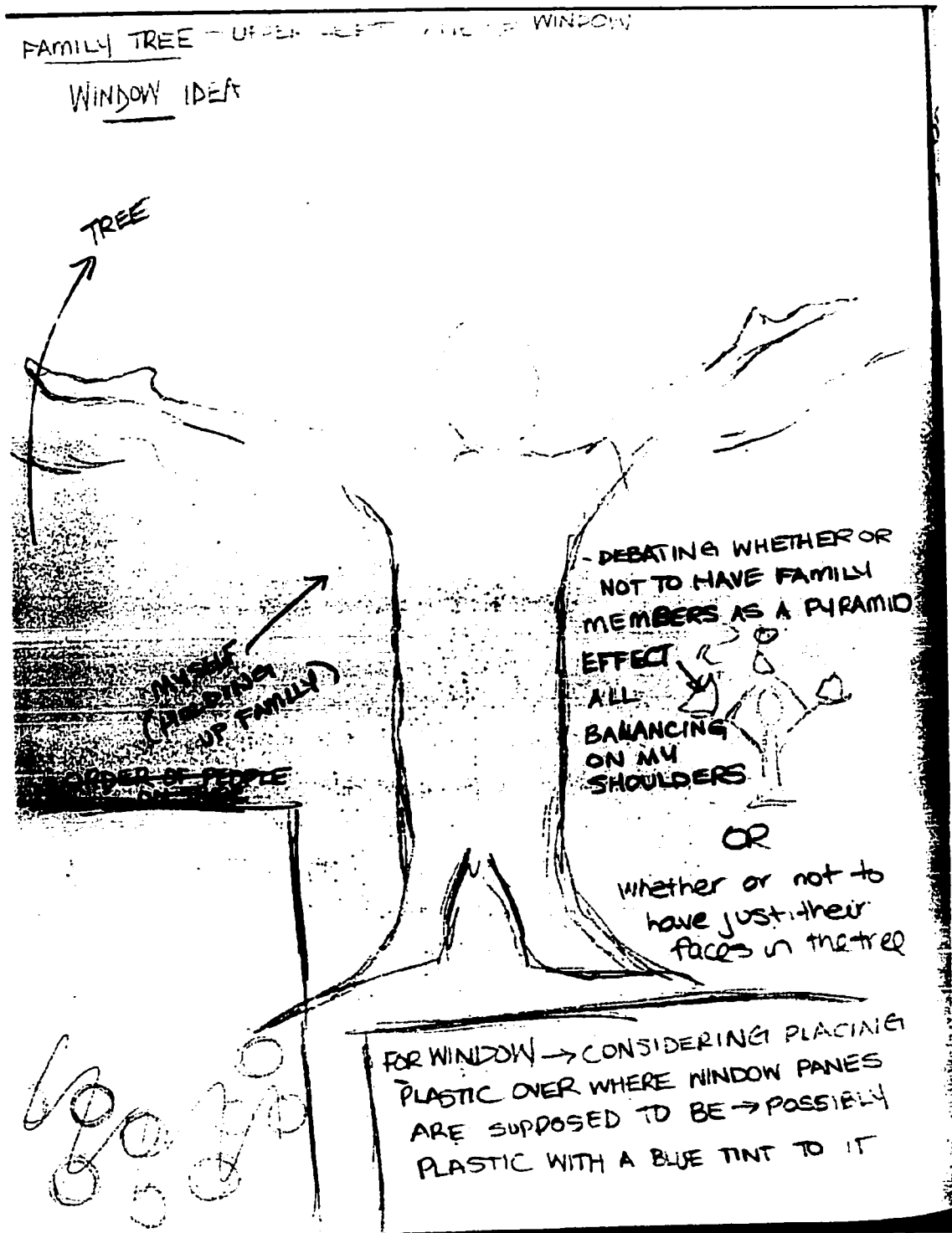
NOTE

- FOR FINAL PIECE INCLUDE APPROX. 1/2 page
synopsis of piece

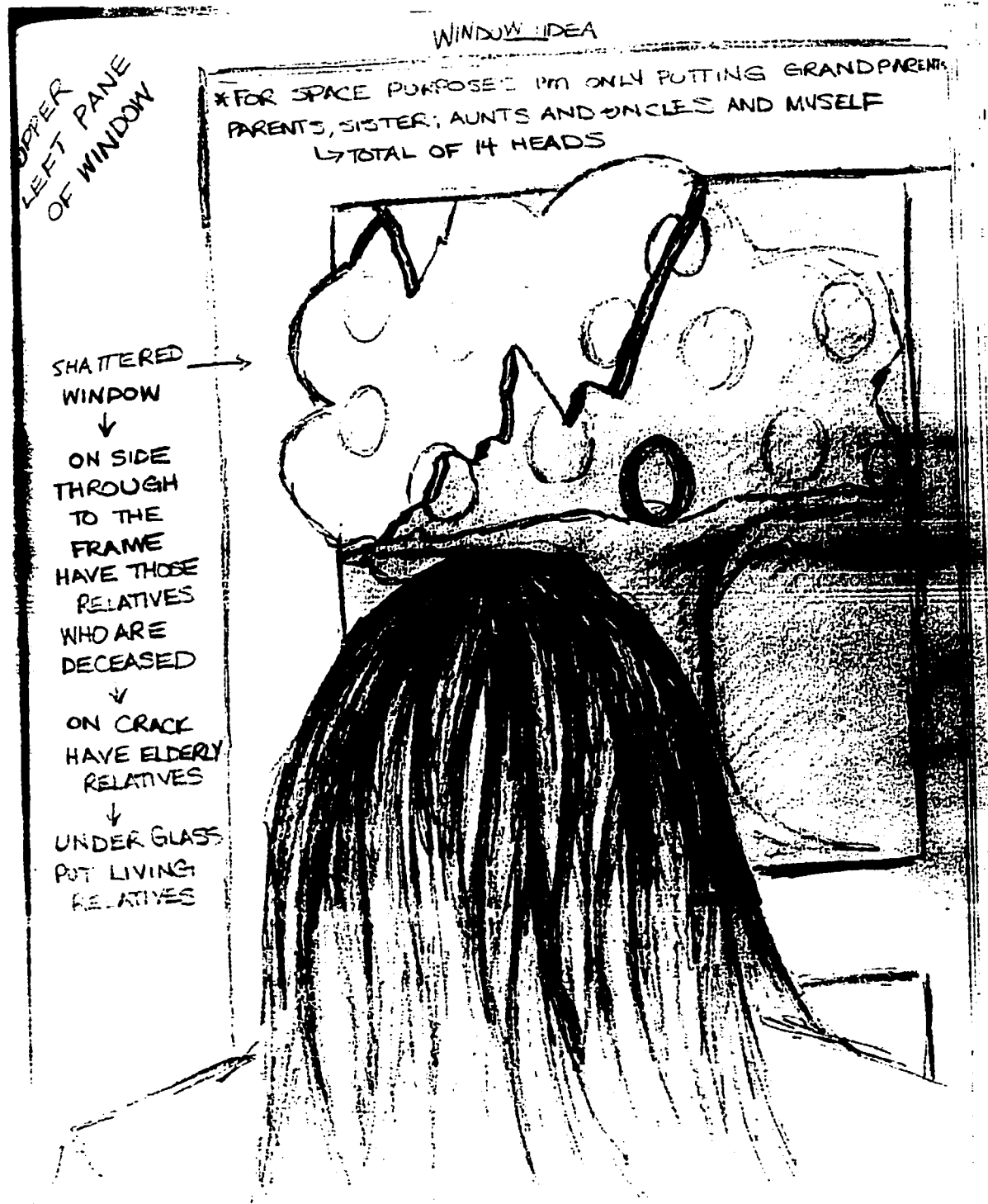


I HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING WHETHER OR NOT THIS
 P E C E W I L L B E O F M E L O O K I N G I N T H E W I N D O W F R O M T H E
 O U T S I D E O R V I C E V E R S A . I H A V E G I V E N I T M U C H T H O U G H T
 A N D H A V E D E C I D E D T H A T I T W O U L D B E B E S T I F I W E R E
 O N T H E O U T S I D E O F T H E W I N D O W . T H I S I S I N S O M E N A Y S A
 S Y M B O L I C R E F E R E N C E T O M Y I R I S H H E R I T A G E . I A M
 T H E O N L Y O N E I N M Y F A M I L Y W H O W A S B O R N O U T S I D E O F
 B R I T A I N A N D I A M T H E O N L Y O N E W H O H A S N E V E R L I V E D I N
 I R E L A N D T H I S S O M E T I M E S G I V E S M E T H E F E E L I N G O F
 B E I N G T H E O U T S I D E R I N T H E F A M I L Y .

Alida Five: Window Idea Cont'd.



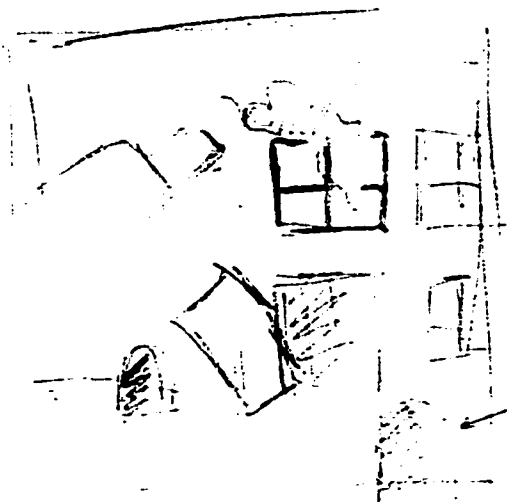
Alida Six: Family Tree (window idea)



Alida Seven: Shattered Window (window idea)

WINDOW PIECE (CONT'D)

UPPER RIGHT HAND PANE OF WINDOW



→ this allows the elimination of the church in the image.
 headline breaking frame of window → portion that it is breaking is the cross

Alida Eight: Window on the Troubles (window idea)

That she was undergoing some internal sorting out of her position around her personal cultural background seemed to come out in her concern, as well, for how the images were to be framed. She wrote that she was considering using “the Claddaugh as a framing element” (Alida, February 21, 1996). As well she discussed a “headstone breaking [the] frame of the picture in two”(Alida, February 21, 1996). All of this seemed to me to be connected to her effort to frame her past and to position herself with regard to it.

My response, however, was to focus on helping her to resolve her formal or drawing issues in a way that would allow her to proceed with her idea. For example, I wrote options for how she could deal with her “family tree” (Collins, February 21, 1995). I did not, at this juncture, enter into much discussion of “framing” as a way of establishing “point of view.”

A week later Alida presented her final drawing, which was a development of her window idea, and which contained symbolic and representational references to her personal cultural past (Alida: Nine: Final Personal Cultural Project). She had placed herself, as a viewer, outside and looking in through the window. She had developed a formal ambiguity in the spatial planes of the work, which seemed to reflect her own feelings about its content. She was aware of the presence of these planes. She wrote that her “piece incorporated a total of four layers starting on the outside with the Claddaugh and working inward to the images in the window. I had originally thought that there would be only two planes in the final piece, the outer and the inner” (Alida, February 27, 1995). She did not make any comment about how that formal device affected the meaning of her work.

My final response to her on this assignment focused on that point. I wrote: “There is also an interesting series of planes set up by the frame[s] of the ‘ring,’ the ‘window’ and the raised edges of the mirror. My eye is moved in and out of the space creating a sense of ‘access’ and a sense of ‘restraint’” (Collins, February. 27, 1995). The subtlety of the work which she had produced seemed to elude Alida at this point. I felt that perhaps I should have been making more of these issues during the earlier part of the exchange.



Alida Nine: Final Personal Cultural Project (Window Idea

At the same time, I felt that to make them explicit too soon would have subverted the process of “positioning” that was emerging through the making of the art. In a way I had trusted Alida’s process and it had turned out well, in terms of the artwork.

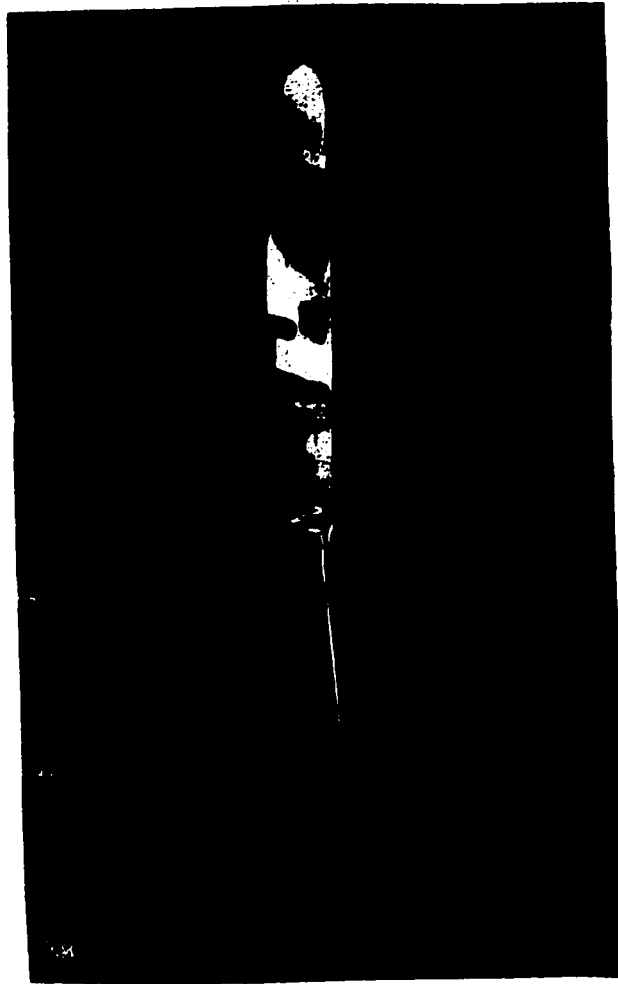
However, it seemed to me that her own understanding of what she had achieved was still open to future deepening. In the end I did not tell her what I thought the work meant but I indicated a way that she might proceed to understand it. Thus the exchange around this drawing came to an end, at a point where I felt that it was just beginning to lead into some interesting discussions of form, meaning and the search for their integration in expression. Alida, however, according to her text (Alida, February 27, 1995), was looking forward to other art works around this theme, a possibility that (given my own experiences in using such personal cultural material in my own art making) I found both promising and exciting.

The next assignment was linked to the previous one, for it dealt with a self-portrait. Alida recognized this even as she affirmed her wish to “produce a final image that is different from my last piece. [I] want to take a different approach/angle” (Alida, March 14, 1995).

Again she took the tack, in her first submission, of listing in some detail, a series of ideas for a drawing that would provide a self-portrait. She submitted seven compositional sketches and notes for each one (Alida, Ten-Thirteen: Selection). As in the previous assignment, I saw this prolific approach as initially positive but one that needed to be directed. Alida had only three weeks to complete the drawing. I saw a need for her to develop coherence in her idea development. I did not specify a problem here, nor did Alida, though I did make it clear that “selectivity” was an important principle to follow. I did not suggest specifically what she should select, though I noted that one of her proposed approaches didn’t seem to fit in with the rest of them. My comments were somewhat brief and left it open to Alida to choose her next step. In her next entry she made it clear that she had done so, choosing the idea of representing herself through images of her hands. Again there was a lot of material.

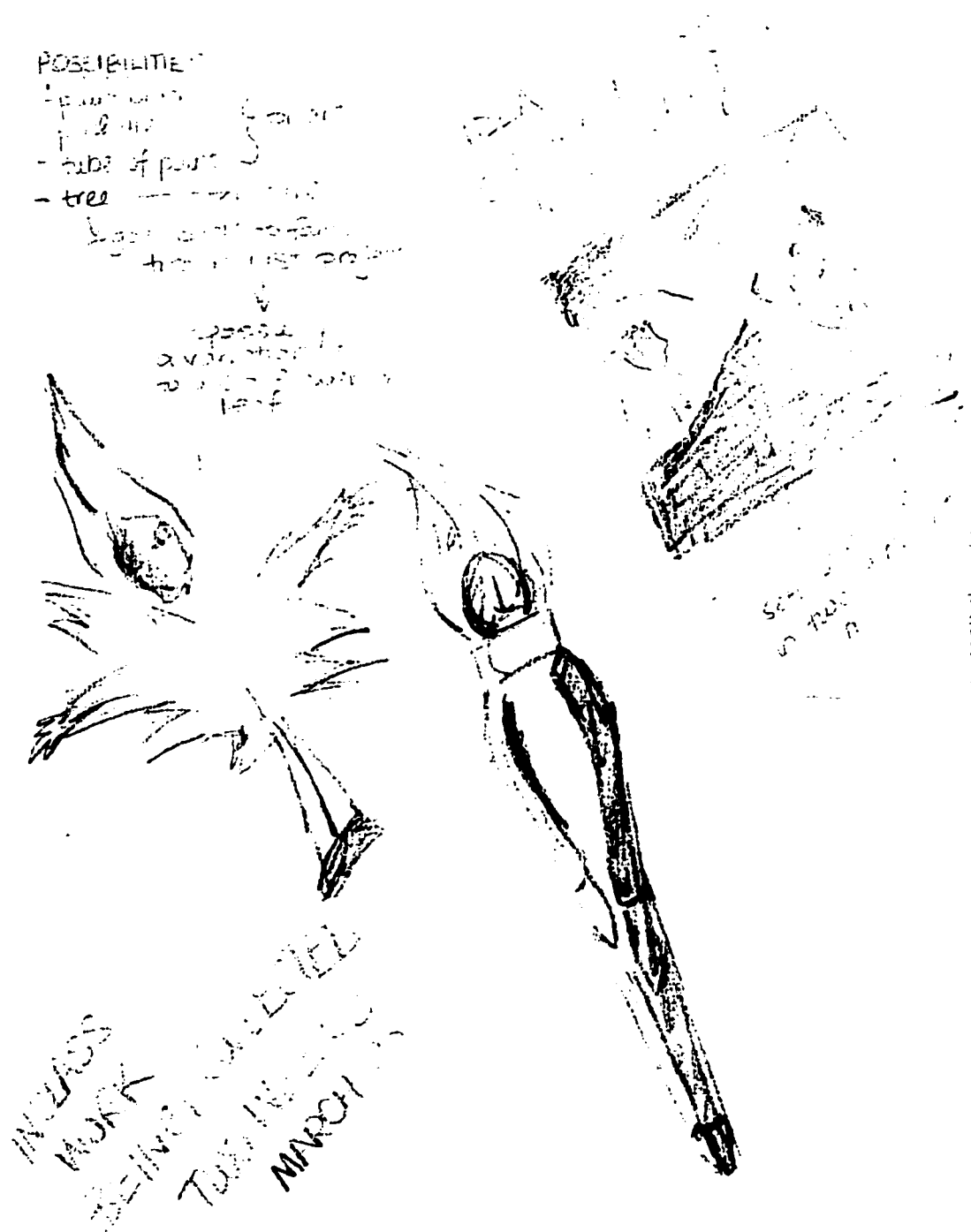
Alan Flescher

Reference for: Self-Portrait within an Object



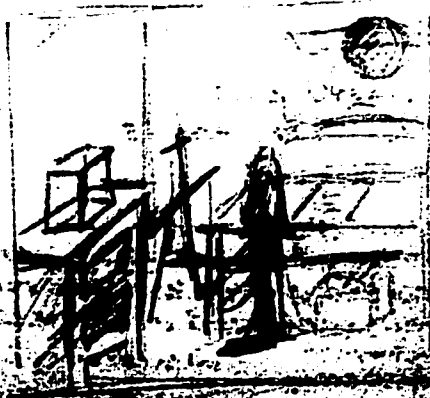
REFERENCE FOR: SELF - PORTRAIT WITHIN AN OBJECT

Alida Ten: Source for Self-Portrait



Alida Eleven: Possibilities

SELF PORTRAIT ROOM IDEA
(THUMBNAIL SKETCHES)



Alida Twelve: Thumbnails

IDEA #1 COLLAGE FACE
(THUMB NAIL SKETCHES)



- hair → as grass or leaves
↓
for nature/outdoors

- one eye → as a flower
↓

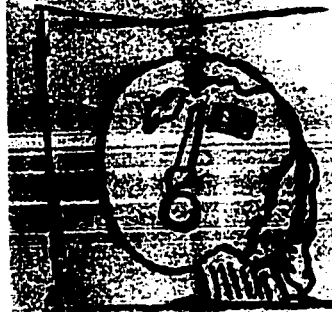
love of gardening
→ other as shamrock → for culture/heritage

- mouth → curled up cat → love of animals

- leaf shape reinforced in shape of face

- nose → paintbrush

neck → pencil crayon } interest in art
↓
statement about being
an artist?



- hair → cloth used to clean up paints/inks

- nose → paintbrush

- right eye → an eraser

- left eye → pen knob

- face → paint palette

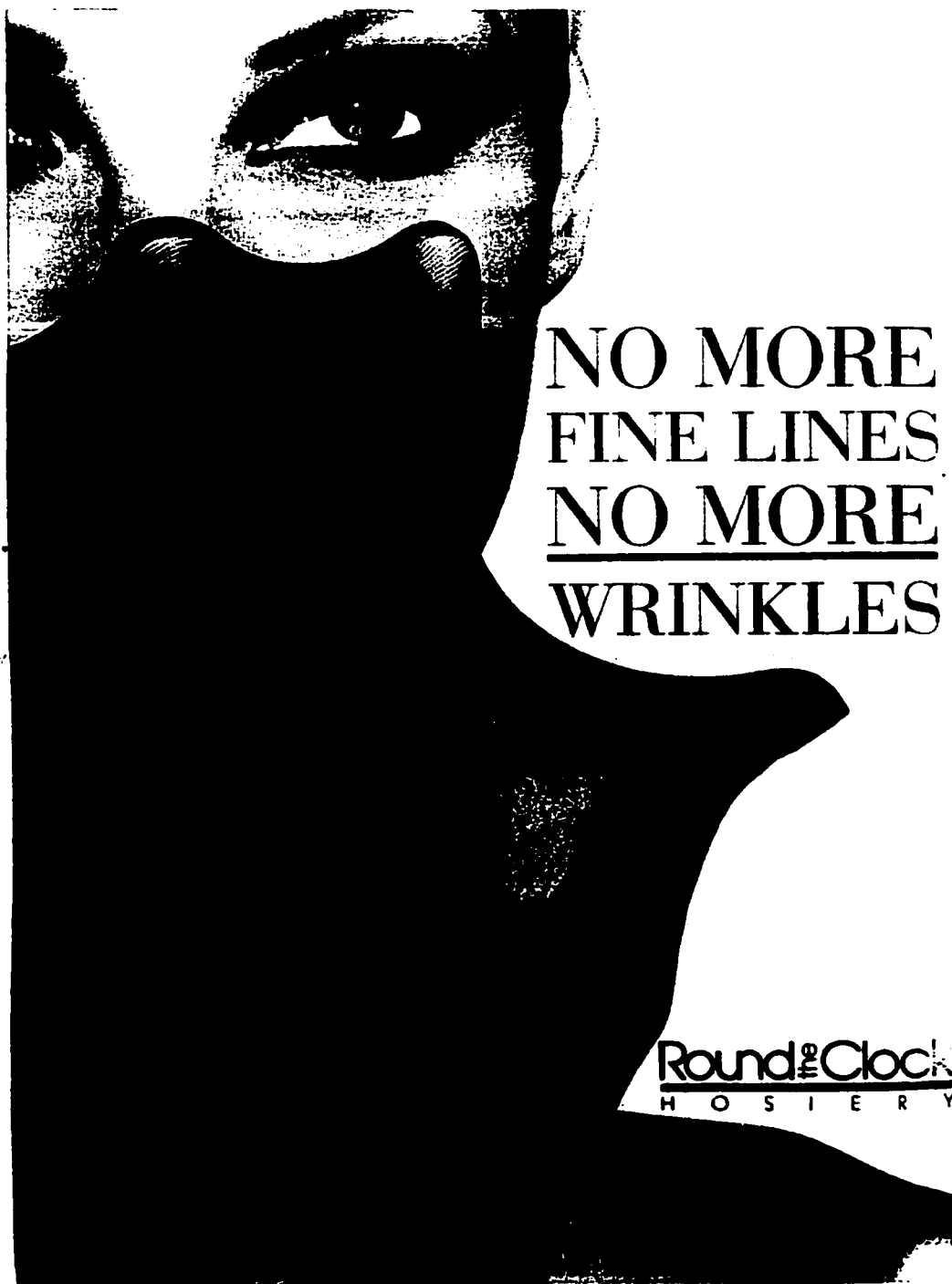
- neck → lid of a tube of paint
↓
shoulders top of the tub of paint

She submitted six full page sketches, five smaller sketches of details and 11 pages of photocopied images of hands (Alida: Fourteen-Twenty-Two: Selection). She also had notes, even more detailed than in her previous entry, for each page of the sketches. In this entry she seemed to be grappling more fully with what she was trying to do as evidenced, I felt, by the number of questions she included in her notes. The most significant of these was centered on what she was trying to say by representing herself through her hands. In a way, that could only be achieved upon completion of the work. Here she was engaged in a series of potential steps and was trying to avoid foreclosing on them to some extent. I had seen this approach in her previous assignment. There her solution had been to include a variety of images, drawn from her family past, in a window frame. Here the problem of selecting seemed to be complicated by having chosen only her hands to represent herself. She turned to a past experience of writing poetry as a kind of inspiration for the solution and brought her autobiography forward again into the process. She suggested, in her sketches and notes, adding text to the images of her hands.

I thought that this latter was quite a good idea since it would allow her to develop the expressive and narrative aspects of her self-portrait within a fairly diagrammatic image. I wrote: "I like your final hand print a lot. What makes it work is the use of text along with the bright images" (Collins, March 21, 1995). This was a calculated response on my part, similar to the one I had made in her previous assignment when I had identified the idea that I liked best. I did not specify how I thought she should work out the idea of combining text and image but I did make some suggestions. I was aware that comments indicating approval in such a specific way ("I like this one best") were directive and could lead to a more immediate closure. In a way I was trying to bring such closure about because I was aware of the time element in the process of the assignment. At the same time I tried, as I had in the previous assignment as well, to buffer my directive comments by pointing to the way that Alida's commitment to her images could produce "more work on (the issue) in future courses" (Collins, March 21, 1995). I was, in this assignment as in the previous one, both aiming at closure and trying to preserve the energy that had clearly gone into the exchange from Alida's side.

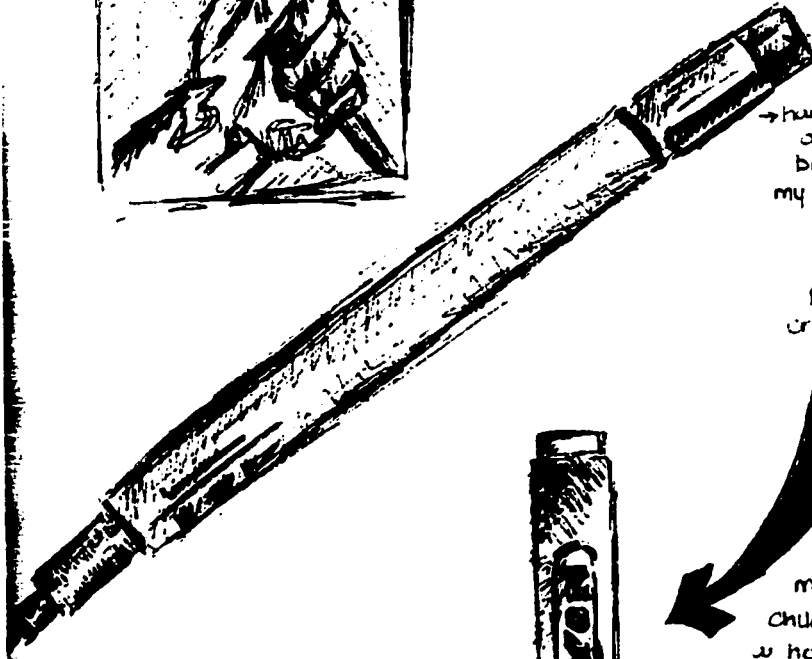


Alida Fourteen: Source for Self Portrait Project



Alida Fifteen: Source for Self Project (Hands)

ARTISTIC HAND



→ hand to be holding either
an ink pen or paint
brush to represent
my artist interests

↓
possibly put a
crayon in the hand
(to show how
and where
it all started)



↓
could start out
with (in the back-
ground, an image
mimicing the way
children draw → possibly
a house or tree or person
and then have it develop
into a drawing that I
would be more likely to
draw now → possibly a
before and after type
self-portrait

Alida Sixteen: Artistic Hand

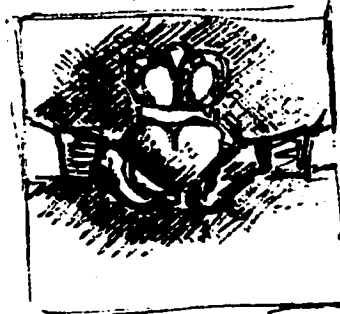
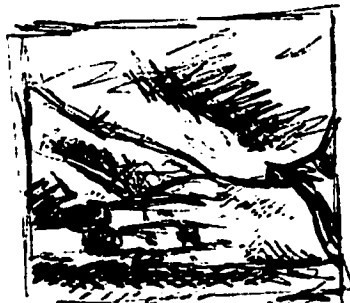


Alida Seventeen: Artistic Hand

PLAIN HAND (WITH RING)



- if this image is chosen then the background needs to be considered.
- Do I do the hand next to jeans and the bottom half of the shirt?
 - Would adding these elements complicate my image and make it look cluttered?
 - Would enlarging the hand to the full size of the frame enhance this image?



← ring to be used
↓
to represent culture

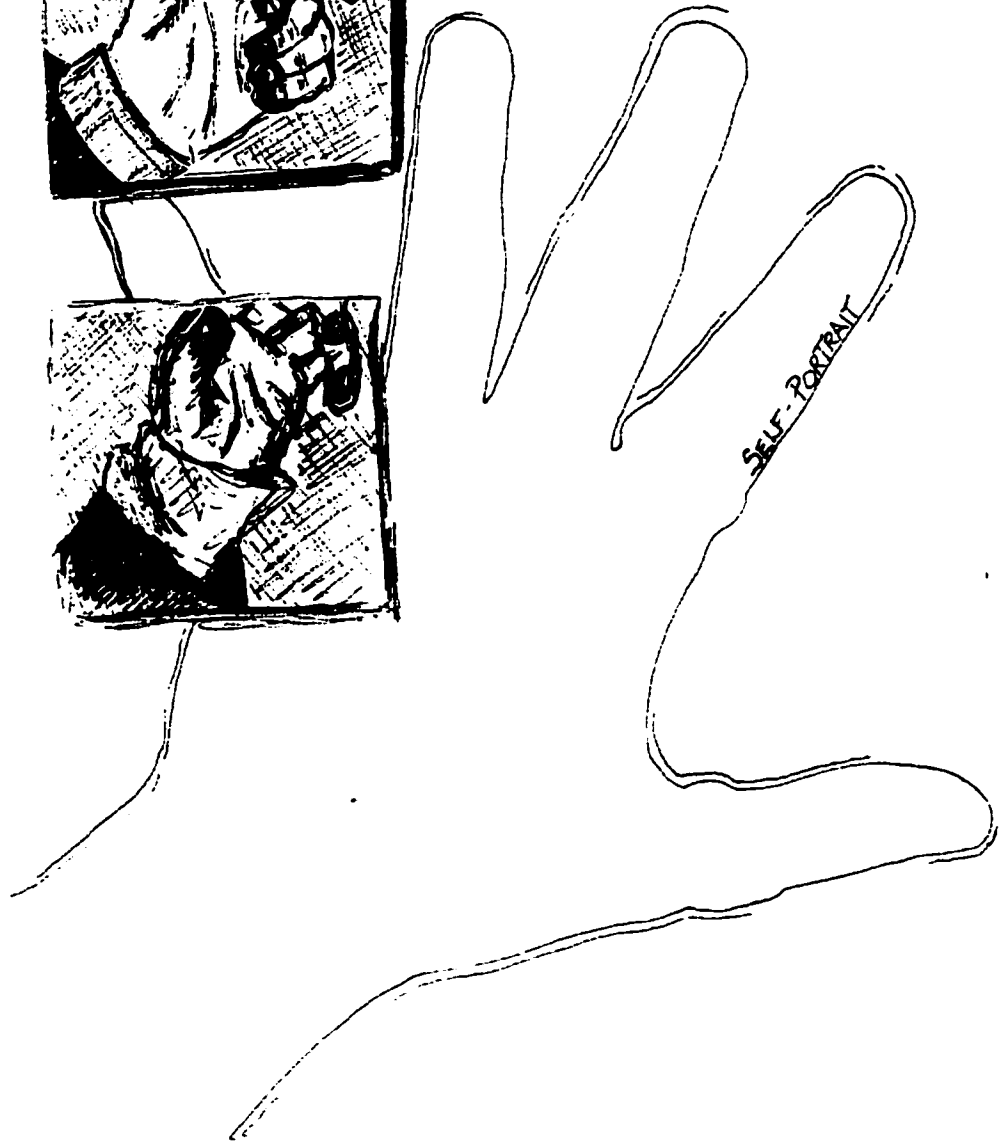
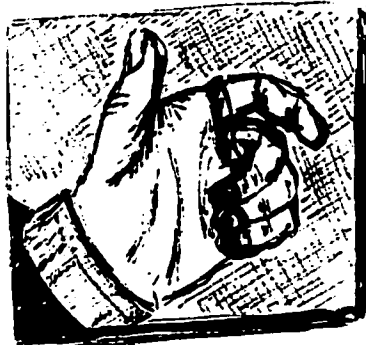
→ probably will use this image, however further examining of the hand in other sketches

Alida Eighteen: Hands Thumbnails Three

SELF-PORTRAIT THROUGH THE HAND (THUMB NAIL SKETCHES)

QUESTIONS

- Do I deal with the left hand or right hand
- What is it that I am saying by representing myself through the hand?

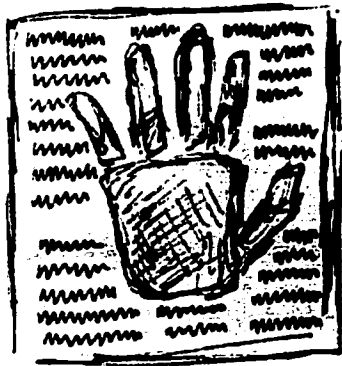


Alida Nineteen: Thumbnails Hands Four

HAND IDEA (CONT'D)

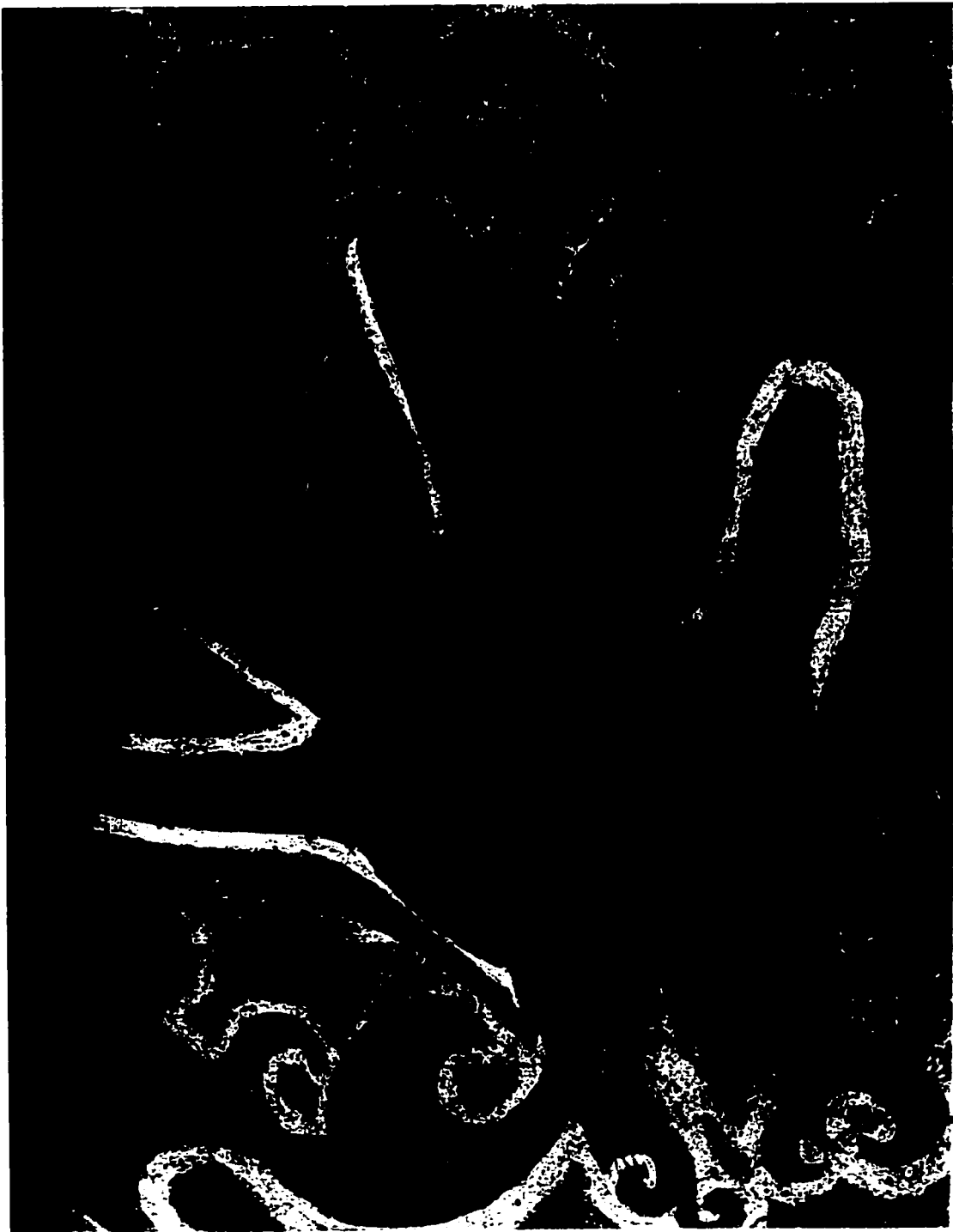


- have looked to a variety of poems for text
- poems in the consideration
 - ↳ A visit to Enniskillen
 - ↳ Autobiography
 - ↳ A Hand
 - ↳ Spring Poem
 - ↳ The Ram's Horn



← maybe have a series of verses, sayings, etc → create a patterning in the background

Alida Twenty: Thumbnails Hands Five



Alida Twenty -One: Hand Print One

IDEAS AND THUMB NAIL SKETCHES

- gloves → chosen images on them
- a series of hands → manipulation of the hand
↳ each representing different interests
- hand of a child → symbolic for youth and growth
- the hand → symbolic for creativity



OVERLAY OF HANDS



purpose?

all hands
are to be the
scale of my
hand (or as
close as possible)

5 hands in total

spin off of the
foot idea (project
#4) → only this
time more
personal (not
so general)

- rubber glove for hobby of refinishing furniture
- hand holding either a pencil or a paintbrush → to represent creativity and artistic abilities/interests
- plain hand → related position → probably the back of the hand → have a clocking ring on one of the fingers to represent culture.
- palm of hand → lines of palm like mapped out roads → can be read as either as the roads that I've travelled (literally) or those roads personally chosen (goals)
- hand print → done in paint → along lines of fingers finger pointing



LOOK FOR:

- books on palmistry
- ↳ research the meanings of the different lines on the palm of the hand
- ↳ incorporate personal imagery that would symbolize meanings in relation to myself.

INSPIRATION: VISITING ARTIST JEANNIE THIB (MARCH 14, 1995)

← using this image (an outline of a hand) could incorporate a poem or text of some kind

In her next entry (Alida, Twenty-Three: Hand Print Three; Twenty-Four: Hand Print Four) I found that Alida had focused her attention on the text-image issue in her proposal. She saw the use of text as a way to “represent the inner self - through poetry, maybe even through the lyrics of a song”(Alida, March 28, 1995). She spent some time discussing how she might do this and what texts she might use.

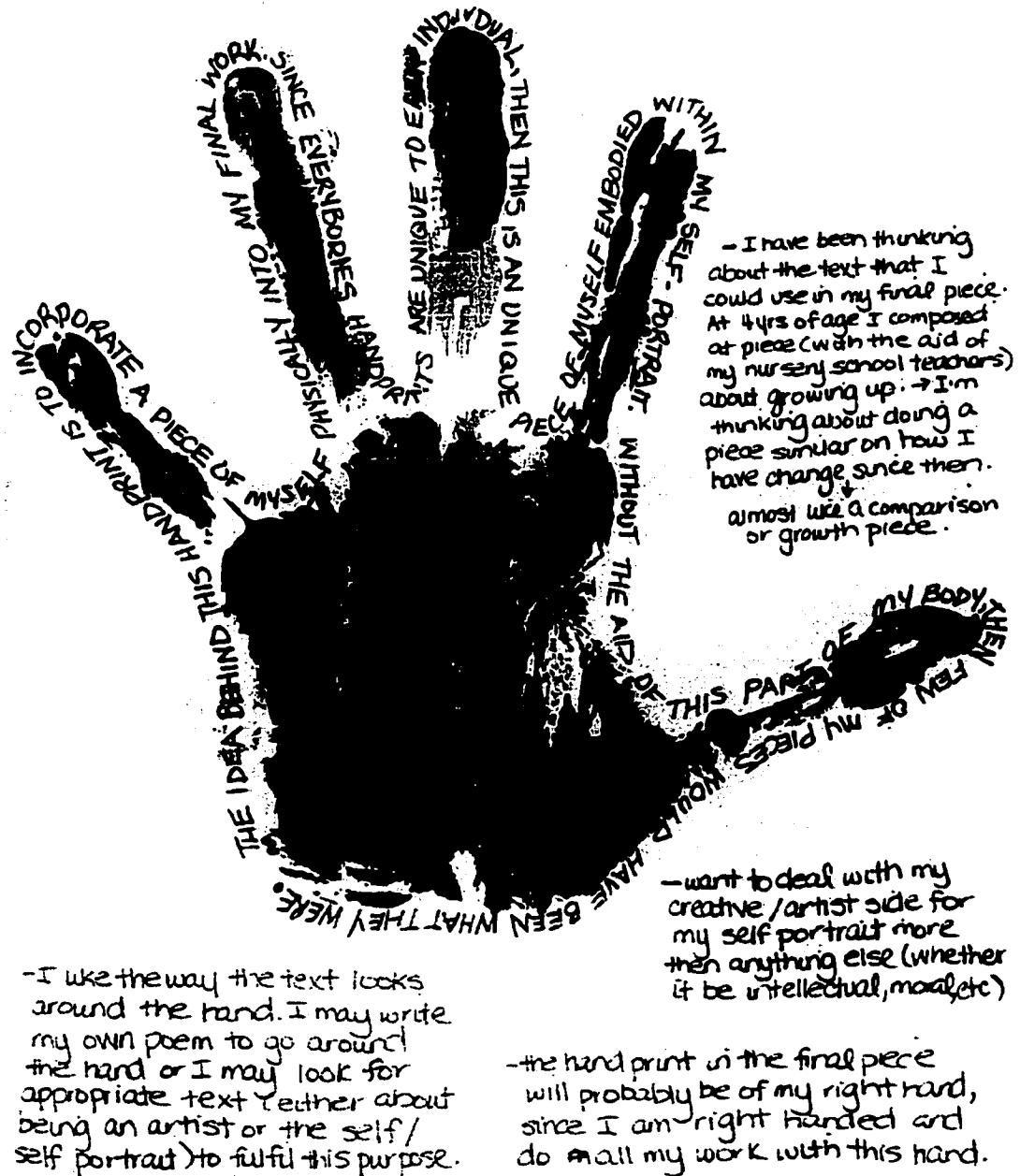
I was pleased with this progression, but I wanted to encourage Alida to maintain what I saw as her use of autobiographical material in this project. I suggested that the text she used be something “you’ve written.” (Collins, March 28, 1996) rather than something from another source. The role of story had strengthened her previous work, I thought, and in this proposal I believed that it would have a similar effect.

What also seemed important to me here was Alida’s use of a collage technique similar to that which she had used in her previous drawing. By using a piece of material cut in the shape of her hand, and covered with words, I thought that she was creating a more “physical presence. The ink outline and the text reinforces that” (Collins, March 28, 1996). This kind of insertion of real materials into her work that sat slightly above the picture plane and affirmed something more palpable than the delineated image confirmed for me the kind of moves Alida had used in her previous drawing. It pointed, I thought, to a strategy that she might explore in future art making.

It also pointed to what Alida was trying to achieve by using her hands as representative of herself. She had proceeded, through her previous work in our exchange to align symbolic, representational and real materials, as a way of both intensifying the images and of establishing them at a distance. This collaged and traced image of her hands seemed to be about to achieve the same thing.

On the whole her movement through various sketches and notations had been, I thought, quite productive. It also seemed to confirm a useful role for myself as interlocutor in so far as I had helped her narrow her focus through a series of steps.

HAND PRINT



Alida Twenty Three: Hand Print Three

- slightly different approach → instead of the text around the outside of the text, put it inside the hand
- words could represent the inner self → through poetry, maybe even through lyrics of a song.



Alida Twenty Four: Hand Print Four



Alida Twenty Five: Final Self Portrait Piece

The following week Alida produced her final “drawing” (Alida: Twenty-Five: Final Self-Portrait Piece).

This was, of course a hybrid work that incorporated drawing, writing, tracing and collage. It seemed both a suitable outcome of our exchange and a successful work that showed, I thought, Alida beginning to push her concept of drawing further into the conceptual realm. Since the curriculum of what would be her next (second year) studio course in drawing focused on the conceptual art process I thought this would stand her in good stead.

Alida’s comments here, as well, showed that she had adhered to the autobiographical possibilities that text had lent this piece. The text spoke of her “memories of my childhood as well . . . my fears as a child growing up.” (Alida, April 4, 1995). As she saw it, the images of the hand were also statements about her creativity. From my viewpoint the piece seemed to speak of an overcoming of past fears in the act of art making in which her hands were engaged. I found this kind of outcome, which I felt I had also seen in her previous assignment, particularly important, and I noted that I appreciated the way that Alida had “suggested different aspects of [her] personality by this piece” (Collins, April 4, 1995).

Alida also noted the importance of putting herself into this work through the act of tracing. I was struck by her expression of such a tangible identification with her work. It spoke both to her desire, as I saw it, to make the work more intense, yet set it at a distance.

What all of this suggested to me, though more in retrospect than at the time, was that the problem with which Alida had been grappling in her art making was more complex than simply having to focus her material. It was rather the need to find a means of bringing her autobiographical experiences into a suitable visual form that would both express her past and her present position with regard to them. In her art making Alida was struggling to find a shape, a visual shape that would express her stance towards her life experience.

This may have been, in part, a result of the kind of assignments with which she had to work. However there was room within those assignments for a less personal approach than that taken by Alida. Other students took that route. Alida did not.

It seemed to me, perhaps because of my own approach to art making, that she entered into a struggle in which many all art-makers, whatever their medium, find themselves engaged naturally; this is bringing their autobiographical experiences into a suitable visual form. In such a situation I saw my efforts to focus Alida's process both as problem solving, and also one of emphasizing context and being supportive. They were meant to help her to do what she had to do anyway and to point her towards future similar efforts.

That such was the outcome was borne out by some of her summary comments on our exchange. Our dialogue had helped her to become aware of "what I am trying to achieve and methods of doing so"(Alida, April 4, 1995). It had done so partly by helping her to see "both my weaknesses and my strengths" (Alida, April 4, 1995) as she went about the process of making her art.

In our exchange Alida did find solutions to problems in her art making and a conscious method by which to proceed. That the exchange was significant in this "making conscious" was clear in so far as it allowed Alida to see whether or not "my ideas are easily, clearly perceived by others" (Alida, April 4, 1995). One of her 'problems' as I saw it was over production and somewhat as with Hubert I encouraged her to be simpler and more selective in her approach. There was less a sense of a grandiose ambition lying behind this than with Hubert. I did find myself pushing for closure and I also had a sense that Alida was following my suggestions too readily. Time, of course, was a big factor here, since each assignment had a four-week envelope from start to finish.

At the same time as with other participants, the real problem that Alida was addressing in her art stemmed from her need to give visual shape to her autobiography. Thus her own stories underwrote the whole process.

I was less forthcoming, as I have already noted, with my own stories in this situation, whether of my art making or of my past. This “holding back” on my part undoubtedly influenced the shape of our dialogue and gave it a different kind of plot than had I revealed my own stories. Each assignment seemed to have its own problem and solution that emerged as a result of an exchange between us.

However, my restraint, I believe, lessened the effect of the asymmetrical relationship of instructor-student and gave Alida more room to be herself in her process. Certainly, my own awareness of how my autobiography had informed much of my art making was important insofar as it enabled me to see and foster the process through which Alida was going. In the end I affirmed that somewhat indirectly when I explained that the sketchbook practice that our dialogue had been based on was “an important habit to maintain since it will, over time, build up a systematic way of working and thinking . . . that provides the foundation for further accomplishments” (Collins, April, 4, 1995). I did not specify that this would depend on the energies of Alida’s experience or her need to shape them but I believe, from the way in which she responded to the assignments, that she had already come to that realization.

C. Alida’s interview

Alida, like Marie, seemed to be mostly successful in her creative and reflective process through the DJSB. Her texts and images revealed reverie like processes. As well, she had a strong self-conscious reflective process identifying and solving problems both visually and through her textual questioning. She was able to connect her life narrative and her image and compositional sketches in a reflective manner but also in a way that showed her searching for form in a pre-logical manner. She was both aware and appreciative of my comments on this process.

My interview with her took place at Sheridan College in a seminar room near the studios in which Alida had worked on the DJSB process. When I began my interview with her, I asked her if my narrative case study “came close to what you thought was happening.”

She said that: “Most of it did.” However right away she specified that she was not so much following me in my comments and suggestions but rather going with “an idea that had the most energy” for her. As well, she said that she was “trying to think about what would make my work unique ...I was thinking about what would make my work a little stronger.”

This latter kind of awareness seemed to be somewhat unusual among the participants, although Marie had expressed both her desire to do good work and her fears that she wouldn't. As well, Hubert had expressed a general anxiety that he would be “inadequate.”

Alida also noted that I had pointed out her focus on framing as an issue in her art. She said that, at the time, she hadn't seen that. However, she then said, as if she had checked it out, “I realize, if I look at my sketchbooks I can see that I was focused on it but I wasn't aware.” I left this comment for the moment but I was to come back to it later and then it began to make more sense for me as well as for Alida.

I asked her about all the research that she had done as a segue into the issue of story in her art. This issue of story was implied as a part of the assignment structure, in a way, at the UTM/Sheridan site. I say “in a way” because Opal did not take up that implication to the same degree as Alida did. Even Sal, who made use of personal narrative events in his work, did not carry them into his work in the same conscious manner that Alida did. In this she was like Marie at the Concordia site.

Alida had found “looking back to my family . . . interesting because I don't get to see my relatives in Ireland very often . . . I heard the stories about my grandfather [who was a beekeeper] from my mother.” Alida had produced a greater deal of research material, both visual and textual, around the assignments and I said to her that part of her attention to framing “seemed to have to do with how to manage all that stuff . . . how you wanted to see yourself in relationship to it.” Alida confirmed that in terms of her personal narrative she “was trying to see where I fit into the family. I was trying to set myself in

relationship to them.” Thus we began to extend her understanding of how framing as a formal issue was connected to her personal narrative.

I began a topic with Alida that I had discussed with the participants at the Concordia site, but that had not seemed an issue at the Sheridan site, at least during the DJSB exchanges. I reminded Alida that I had mentioned that I had my own stories about my Irish grandfather but that I had occluded those from our dialogue. I wanted to find out if that was good or bad.

For Hubert, it had helped that I had kept my views as an Ontario resident in the background. For Marie, however, my telling one story from my life had been pivotal in the DJSB outcome. For Sharon, references to my personal narrative, although I hadn’t told stories, had helped her, as it had Marie, to trust me.

Alida believed that if I had brought in my own personal stories that “it might have complicated things. I would have been trying to think about what would my relationships have been in relation to your family. This way [without the teacher’s stories] I just thought about my own thing . . . As far as the political issues go, I didn’t want to focus on them. I didn’t want to bring problems in because it would create problems for my peers.” This reminded me of Hubert at Concordia who maintained that he would have altered his political project if there had been complaints.

I used Alida’s comments to get back to the issue of framing. I said “I felt that the work that you did on that piece [based on Personal Cultural History] had to do with where you stood in relationship to the material...it was a picture of where you stood in your feeling.” And for Alida that “made sense.”

I then went back to the topic with which we had begun. It specifically dealt with my impact on the situation, my role in the DJSB. Alida indicated that she was following her own process. However she said: “You helped me see where I was going. You’d point out where I was going and then I’d keep going.” This reminded me somewhat of Marie, who,

even though she had acknowledged my role, seemed somewhat upset that she couldn't do it all on her own. Alida only knew where she was going, at least in the DJSB exchange, once I had pointed it out.

She elaborated on that in response to a question about the role of the teacher. "The teacher's role is a bit of everything. To show the student what they might not have seen, be a guide, keep them from going in a direction where they could lose themselves completely." Then Alida noted that she was concerned about grades during the DJSB and about the time constraints

I came back to the issue of story and asked Alida if the fact that the DJSB projects had an autobiographical aspect made them easier. She said: "Yes. My best works are connected to me because I'm so involved with my own energy. My better works come from me." Then she said that it was important [for the teacher] to remind students of other points of view. "You have to push and pull." I found this a bit contradictory to what she had said earlier about my bringing in my story or point of view. I again asked her about my role.

She said: "You helped me especially with the first project to see [what was important . . . and that made the second project easier." I pushed the idea of story a bit further then into the process of the DJSB itself: "As you focused on your artwork (in the DJSB) you were giving shape to your autobiography . . . What I am saying is that artists give shape to their life story." Alida agreed. "A lot of work that you see coming out of students is based on their lives and the best work comes out of story."

I asked Alida if she could say something about how she saw "composition" coming out of such a nexus. She said: "In my mind I was trying to deal with where I was, what was going on, and in that way I got into compositional issues. At the time I was thinking about meaning ...the composition evolves out of the meaning."

I asked her a more direct question about the DJSB process itself as a source of awareness around her art making. She said that she found that the "sketchbook is something I

depend on a lot . . . It helps me map out . . . I go through a sense of steps . . . through to the final project.” She went on to say that she had sustained the sketchbook practice into the second year of her course, but without the dialogue, of course. She talked about her first year experience in a way that recalled Joey R. “First year university was a confusing time . . . You’re not in high school anymore . . . and everything was very different. I was feeling I was in one place but this was another place.” I noted immediately that her “Personal Cultural History” piece, where the framing issues had arisen, “was about Ireland but it was also about a state of mind . . . [It was] symbolic of your state of mind in that [first year].”

I went on to note again that in the DJSB “I was helping but I had more of a sense of directing than was the case.” However I had made a suggestion that Alida had liked and followed in the second assignment. She responded to my observation. “I found this (suggestion) helpful...Sometimes I had put something down but I couldn’t see it.”

I pushed this a bit more in the area of using one’s autobiography. Alida responded “I try to connect it to what happens ...but sometimes it doesn’t work because the things don’t connect.”

I gave her an example of how personal narrative and compositional concerns, like her concern with framing, could connect, and did, in her “Personal Cultural History” project. This tied off the issue of framing and made it much clearer how it had related to her familial past, and to her experiences of her life during the DJSB. “In the PCH project” I said, “when you got into that work, it not only showed images from your point of view . . . it expressed formally how you felt about that (outside of it in some way) in terms of Ireland, your family and even your situation at school. The piece became a real summation.”

Alida agreed with me that had happened but she said, “I don’t think I was aware of the composition . . . I have to work through the meaning. I do my little sketches. I’m trying to sketch what I’m seeing in my mind. Sometimes they’re doodles. I’m thinking one thing

and trying to get to something else.” This reminded me a bit of Marie’s descriptions of her process but Marie, with more experience, was more aware of composition and how it related to her meaning.

Alida indicated that in her process “The image comes first ...the text later.” She would try to visualize the finished work but, “sometimes something will emerge that’s different.” I noted that that when she had begun writing about her work that it had improved.

Alida agreed. “Yes, definitely. . . When I write it down my results feel better. When I began writing it did get better. . . When I have it out there in front of me it’s better. In second year (after the DJSB) if I didn’t write about it, the work didn’t run as well.”

Alida also indicated that she did not want to achieve closure too quickly in her projects. This seemed to be somewhat like Hubert. “I don’t like to finalize something. I like to think it through right to the last minute so I have a clear sense. . . I like to use the time as much as I can and get the most out of it.”

I told her a bit about Hubert without mentioning his name. I noted that I was anxious about him being able to finish his projects, and that I had some of the same anxiety around her work. Part of the issue was embedded in the constraints of any school course. I remarked: “There is a need for closure [in school] but art is mysterious because it is tied to your own life.”

She talked a bit about her own teaching as a volunteer (she hoped to become a teacher) and how she had seen some of this problem in her projects with the younger students. She said that her younger students were more reluctant to talk about the work and I was reminded of what Sharon had said about that.

Just before we ended I extended the idea of art growing out of one’s autobiography to the idea of one’s teaching doing so as well. “Who you become as a teacher becomes a

reflection of your own life story [just like your art does].” I was clearly thinking of myself as well as Alida’s future plans.

Alida said that she had enjoyed the DJSB and the follow-up to it. She had found reading the case study narrative useful because at the time of the DJSB she had not seen how her art was both reflecting the stories in her life and giving a new shape to her autobiography. Now she was so aware. Thus I saw again, as with the other participants with whom I had conducted the interview, that the case study narrative acted as an opportunity for the participants to see the shape of the DJSB, as well as providing them with an opportunity to amend my version of it.

We briefly discussed the possibility of a mutually constructed narrative case study as a regular practice in classrooms for assessing the situation. Then the interview ended.

Like other participants Alida confirmed both that the Narrative Case Study was useful, and that it was mostly correct, though like other participants she also had revisions. Like Marie, at the Concordia site, she revealed that she had felt some resistance to the idea of my input having formed her solution. I simply showed the way from her viewpoint (by chance I also had an Irish background; that helped me understand her issues in her Personal Cultural History Project).

She affirmed that though she may have appeared compliant she went with the idea with energy. She said that the teacher was a guide; from my viewpoint, this implied that one must have some trust in the teacher. Alida seemed to have trusted me but only up to the point where she felt she could go her own way.

Alida was able to enter into states of reverie and to bring that forward into a problem solving process related to her compositions. This was also like Marie at the Concordia site. Like Marie and others she confirmed that for her image making came first and the text in which she reflected on it followed and solidified the process established through sketching.

Alida, a bit like Hubert, though with less grandiosity, wanted to make her work unique, different from that of other students. This seemed to be driven by values she ascribed intrinsically to art making but she also confessed to wanting to get high marks. In this and in the way school constrained 'time on task' there was a sense of getting things done to meet extrinsic needs, a certain compliance, in spite of her protests.

Alida, like the students at Sheridan, suffered from a kind of first year anxiety. Joey R had given voice to that as had Alice. Alida differed from them in that she was able to find an art making solution to embody her concern, though again, this was made possible partly by the site constraints or opportunities.

Alida had revealed only a bit more of her story in the interview than she did in the DJSB exchanges. However, it was clear that what she said made it evident how her formal concerns with framing were connected not just to ancient stories about her family, but to her own current experiences as she went through her first year. She had seen, through the interview, how that had been the case, and also, that by making art, she was giving a further and clearer shape to her life story.

She remained somewhat ambivalent about my role in all of this, preferring to see me as a "spotter" of trends. Perhaps this was somewhat inevitable in a situation with fixed exercises supplied by the teacher and which had to be completed within a relatively short amount of time.

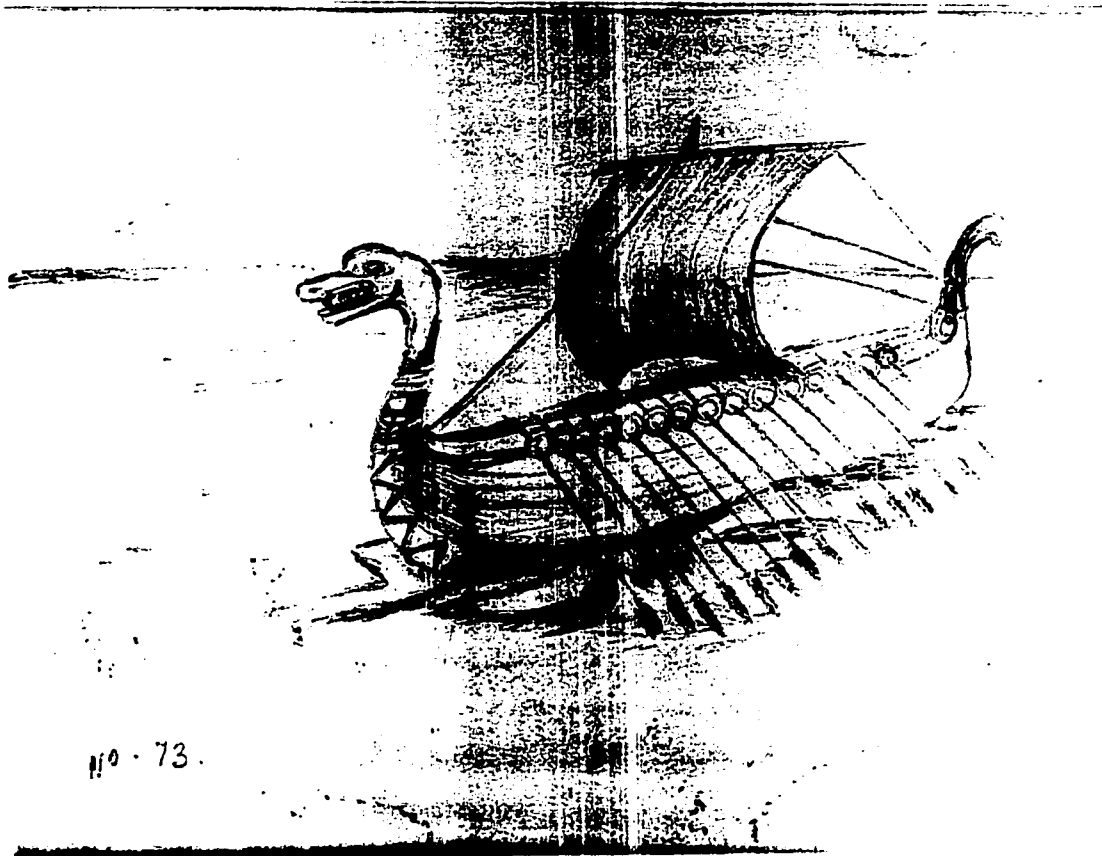
At any rate, I had a greater sense of how Alida's story had been reflected in her art and a clearer sense of how my role was seen by another of the participants. I was also aware how in this DJSB exchange with Alida, where I had seen a success similar to that achieved with Marie, Alida, like Marie, had a sense of wanting to discount my role as well as affirm it.

Alida was the first participant to confirm that she was maintaining a sketchbook practice. However she was still in school at the time of the interview.

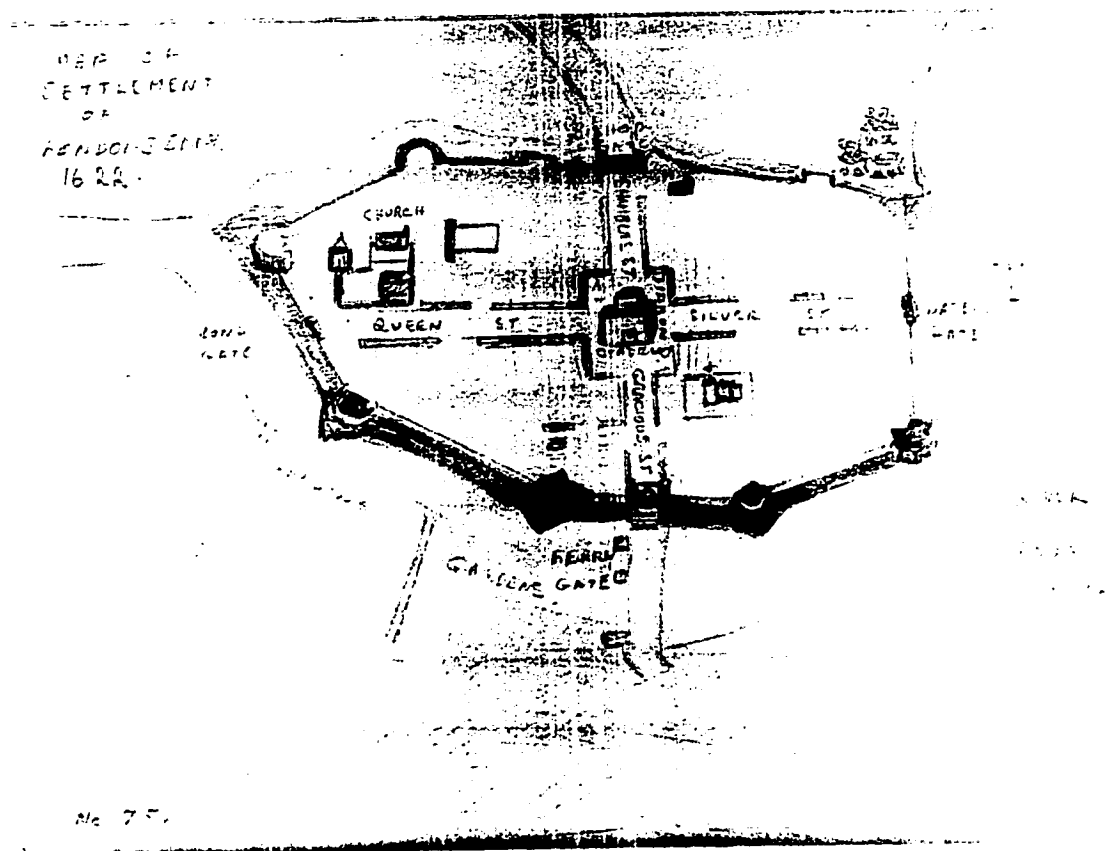
D. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Opal: mapping the past

Opal, like Alida, had been somewhat reticent in the in-class discussions that preceded the DJSB exchange, but she had a strong sketchbook practice that had been apparent in my evaluations at the end of the first semester. As I have mentioned, the procedure that I established was for the students to carry out research into a particular problem and to locate relevant visual material. Next they were to produce detail studies and compositional studies for a drawing, usually on a sheet 22 by 30 inches. All of this took place over four weeks. Opal already had established that pattern in her art making. When she sent me her first entries for the second semester DJSB (sketches and text), which were related to the assignment on personal cultural history, she was following established practice. Opal was a good researcher and collected information, it seemed, fairly easily. Her first entries reflected that in so far as they provided a historical overview of the specific group, the “Boericians,” from which her family descended, and of the location, Northern Ireland, in which they lived for about 400 years prior to Opal’s birth.

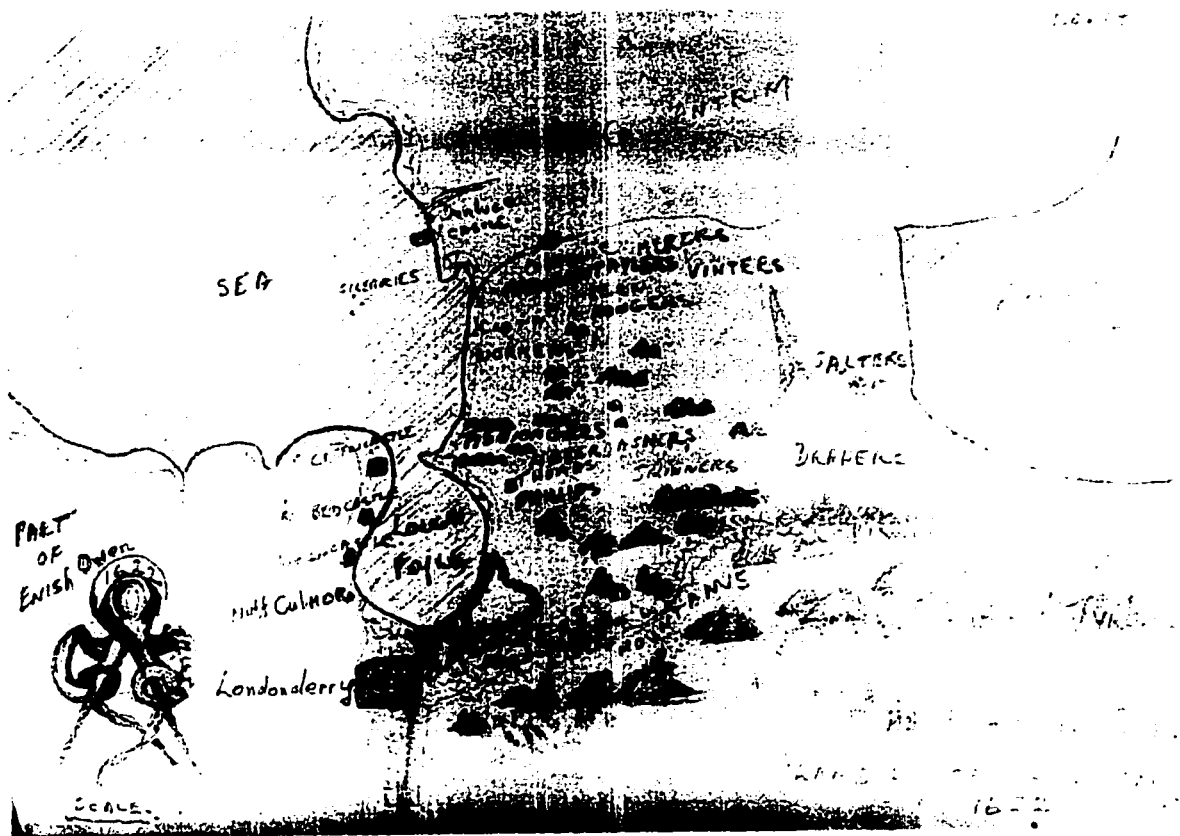
In her first entry (Opal: One to Three), which included sketches of maps and ships of the time of original settlement of the Six Counties in what is now Northern Ireland, Opal conveyed how she wished to approach the issue of personal cultural history. She wanted to look at it “from the aspect of migration of people from one part of the globe to another, and the conquest of one race by another, cultural Heritage, and assimilation of races, changes in Cultural and religious beliefs” (Opal, January 19, 1995). This initial statement, which placed the consideration of the issue in a broad historical vein, took it out of the personal somewhat. Opal’s own stories about Londonderry and her own immediate ancestors such as her grandparents were not to play a part in her approach to the question the assignment posed.



Opal One: Viking Ship



Opal Two:Map of LondonDerry

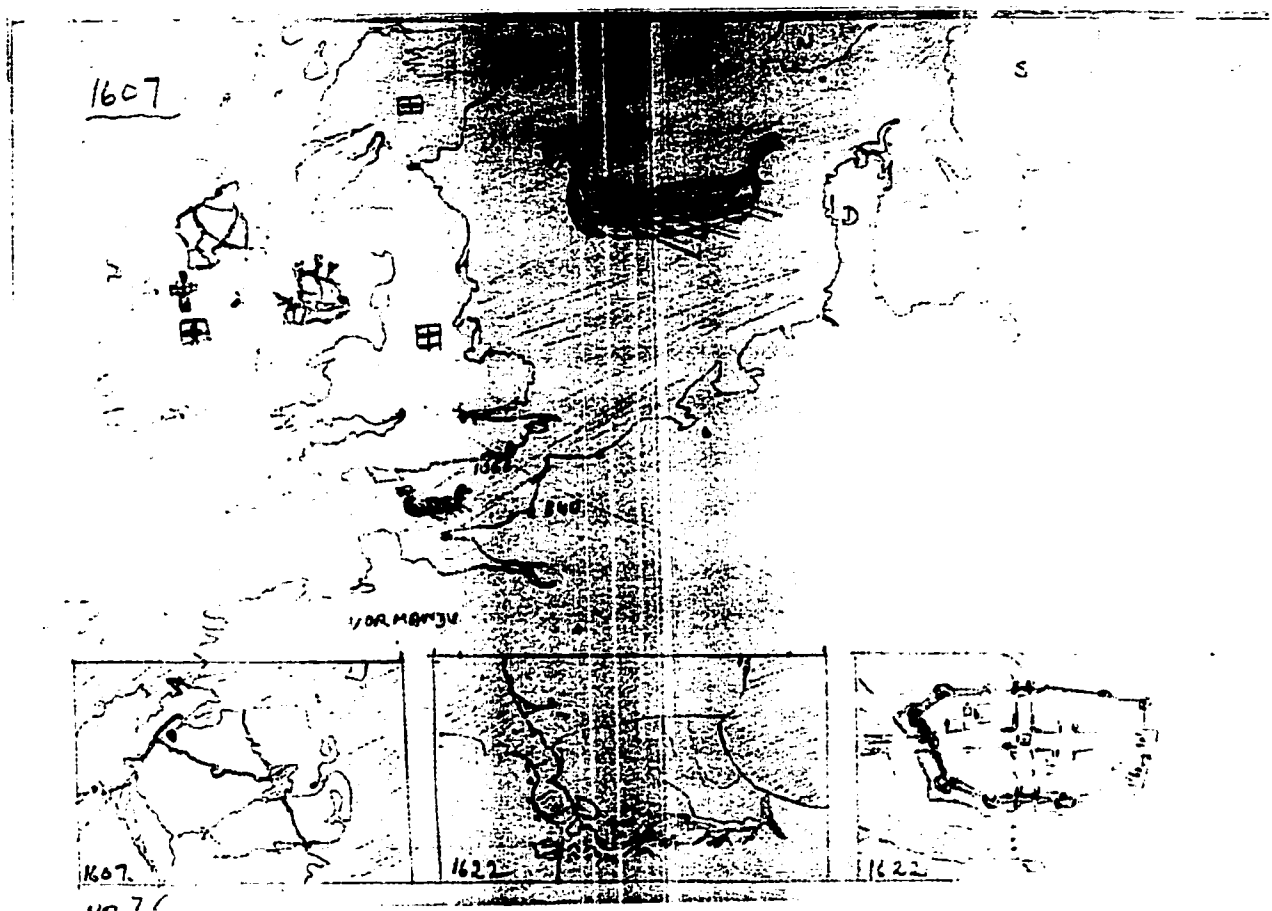


Opal Three: Enish Owen (LondonDerry)

Opal did not state any particular problems in terms of her composition. Rather she presented some ideas, through her sketches and through her comments. Her sketches and comments focused on images of ships and on maps, e.g., "This is a map of Co. Londonderry about 1622. It shows the areas of land granted to the 12 London Companies" (Opal, February 4, 1995). However, in my responses, I made some identification of a possible problem that I thought might stem from her extended awareness of her historical background. I had seen this problem with other students in the class around this project. The idea of searching through their immediate and distant family past for material out of which to make art had tended to produce a lot of material, and far more than could be dealt with in the time allotted for the assignment. I found myself promoting "something specific" in the history of Opal's family that could become "the basis of a work" (Collins, February 4, 1995).

As well as asking Opal to "be specific," I wrote, "Keep your idea simple; don't over-complicate your composition" (Collins, February 4, 1995). As I had in other situations, to offset this narrowing of what was clearly interesting material, I urged Opal to look to "later drawings and paintings . . ." (Collins, February 4, 1995), to make use of that material. As well, I found myself responding to her sketches, suggesting that she "might solve the issue by doing a drawing based on a map, much like your sketchbook maps" (Collins, February 4, 1995). In a way I was trying to model how the idea of simplification could be applied in this context where, as I saw it, she already had the beginning of a compositional idea.

When I next saw an entry from Opal it was after the Reading Week at the University of Toronto and two weeks had passed. The idea of the "map" as the basis of a composition that could express her personal cultural background had taken hold. She presented a fairly complete sketch of what it might look like (Opal: Four: Composition Sketch). It showed an overview of the area of Northern Ireland and included three inserts with more detailed maps.



Opal Four: Composition Sketch

I recognized that this sketch, for Opal, probably represented closure on the ‘working out’ part of the assignment. As well, I was struck by the way in which Opal had followed on my comments on her work so far. This “final” idea, I felt, had already been there in her earlier sketches and my acceptance of those seemed to confirm her approach.

While I encouraged her in this proposal, I also suggested some further emendations that might shift the map, as a compositional sign, into another era, I suggested that she use “the conventions of older map making, scroll work, archaic type faces, inserted characters, animals, flags etc.” (Collins, February 21, 1995). Opal had already moved in that direction, but I was trying to get her to emphasize it a bit more for the sake of making the composition more expressive.

From my own experience of using personal cultural material in making art, Opal’s broad historical approach to the issue of her Northern Ireland ancestry seemed somewhat distancing. My ancestors were also Irish, albeit Southern and I had used similar material to develop a series of pieces for my M.F.A. exhibit where I had tried to link both the historical and the expressive. Thus I was open to such an attempt. Opal’s personal feelings, her personal stories, however, were not to be a part of her art making process here. In a way I was relieved at that since I did not want to place either of us in some kind of adversarial position. My goal in the classroom, and in the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange, was to allow the students room to develop their own approach to their material. Hence, I did not bring my stories about my background forward either. Even so, I felt the lack of such personal material from Opal’s proposed drawing as an absence.

Because of her approach, her final piece (Opal Five: Final Personal Cultural History) which was an expanded and developed version of her sketchbook prototype, was more didactic than expressive. It placed her personal cultural background within the broader and official historical prospect, which her own notes on the final piece confirmed. She affirmed the settlement of her ancestral home, Londonderry, “should be understood in historical context and not be seen as an isolated incident” (Opal, February 25, 1995).

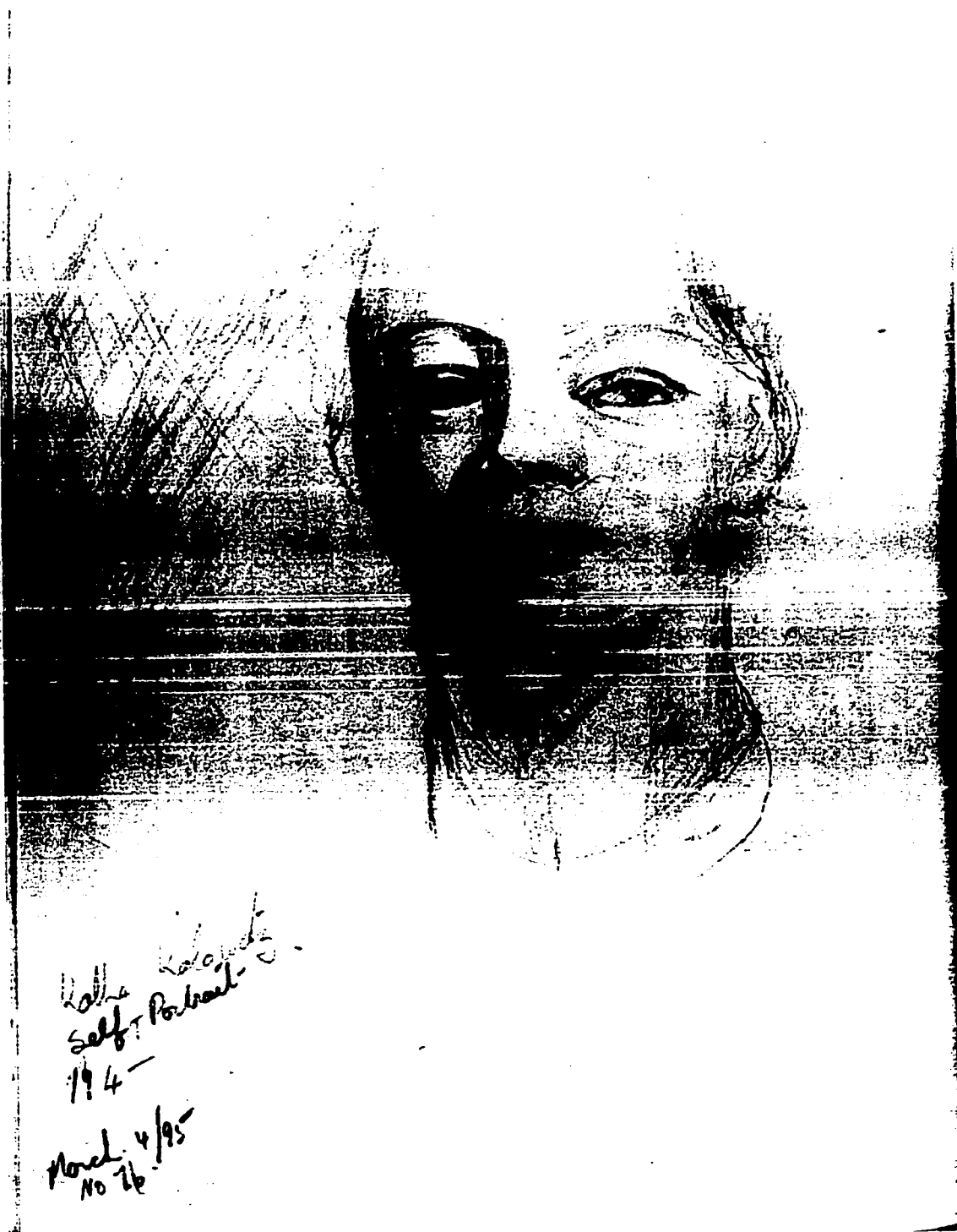


Opal Five: Final Personal Cultural History

On the whole, however, within the context of our dialogue I was pleased with her work. She had developed her idea following on my emphasis on simplicity and focus. She had progressively developed the visual material through her sketches and then integrated it into the final piece. If, at times, I thought that she was following my suggestions a bit too closely, in fact my suggestions were based on her sketches and her notes. There was a mutual reflective process that led to Opal's final drawing even if I felt it as expressively attenuated.

A very similar process seemed apparent to me in Opal's second research assignment drawing, a self-portrait. Here again she began our exchange with a double entry. She did not indicate a specific problem with the assignment but she carefully outlined different historical and compositional categories into which she thought artists' self-portraits had fallen. What seemed important was the position in which the artist had chosen to represent him or her, and what aspect of their personality of soul was revealed through the self-portrait. Opal included sketched copies of some artists' self-portraits (Opal: Six-Eight) . One of these was copied from a self-portrait of Kathe Kollwitz. Opal wrote: "The interesting aspect of drawing this portrait (of Kathe Kollwitz) was that I felt the presence of the artist. It is a very expressive portrait of the inner person . . ." (Opal, March 8, 1995).

Such emphasis led me to believe that this might be what Opal would try to achieve in her own work in this assignment. However she had presented a number of models so I immediately raised the issue of focus as I had in the previous assignment. "The question is, 'what approach will you take to your own self-portrait?'" (Collins, March 14, 1995). Again I made some suggestions following on Opal's own approach to the subject. "You can use an existing model and place yourself in that [or] you could also create a gallery of artists' self-portraits and include yourself in those." (Collins, March 14, 1995).



Opal Six: Copy from Katha Kallewitz



Al. Albertini
Albertini
- 1684.
March 65 95

Opal Seven: Copy from Albertini



Opal Eight: Copy from Van Gogh

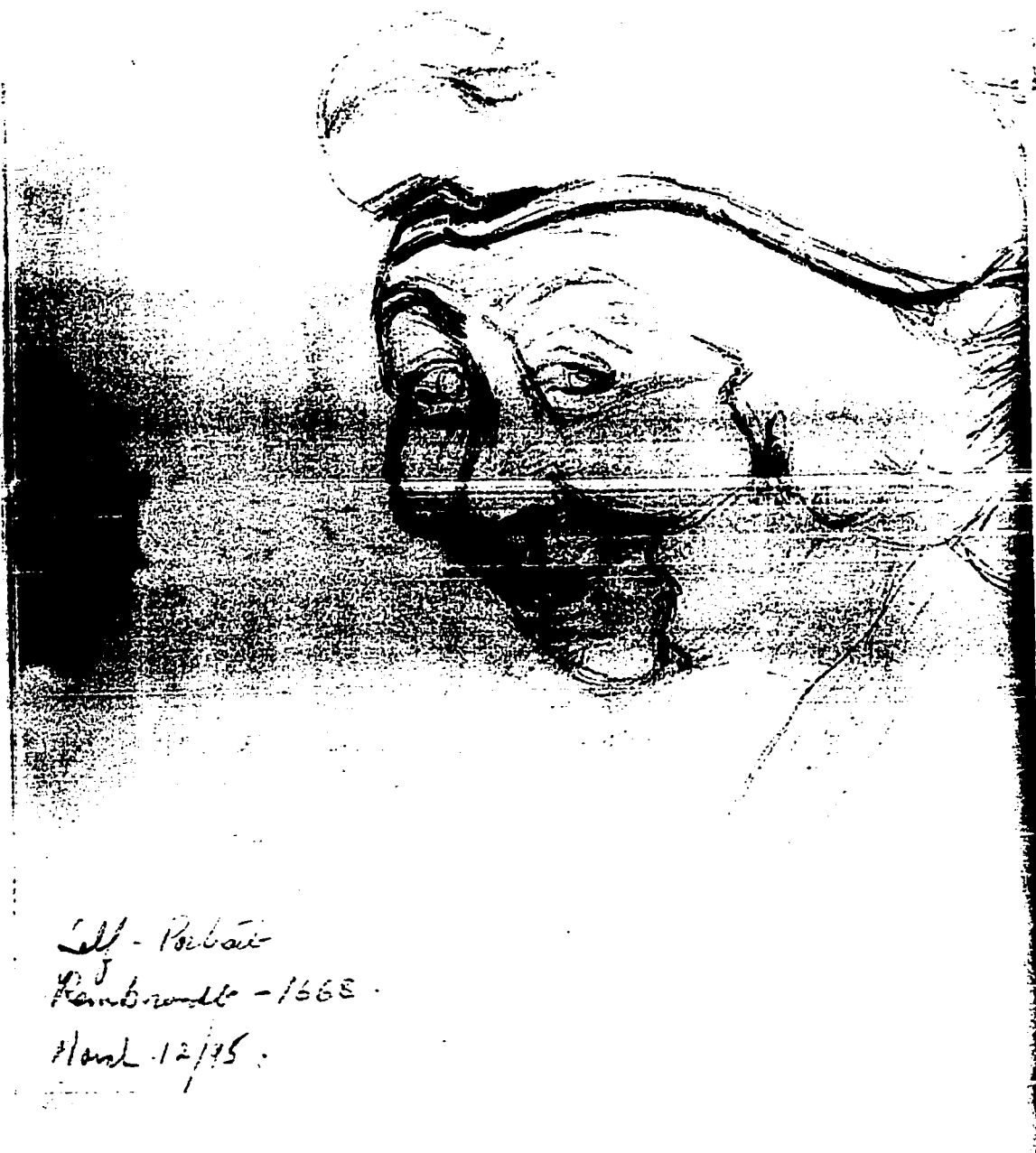
This situation seemed very similar to the previous exchange around the “personal cultural background” assignment. Opal was presenting me with evidence of her research and a group of sketches. I was trying to pick up on what I saw as possibilities within her work and reinforce what I saw as her primary direction. I wasn’t trying to solve any particular problem that she had defined. I was, however, trying to establish the need to focus and make choices from the possibilities that she was presenting.

She reviewed other possibilities in her next entry but she seemed to be more focused on those artists whose works were expressive of the inner person. She compared Mary Kelly’s more generalized presentation of the feminine self with that of Kathe Kollwitz and she wrote of Alice Neel whose “work also reveals the inner character” (Opal, March 19, 1996).

Her sketches, at this juncture, showed further study of past artists’ self-portraits (Opal Nine to Twelve) but also a compositional idea for her own work (Opal Thirteen: Compositional Sketch for Self-Portrait). In it she picked up on the idea of the self-portrait as a record, something she had mentioned in her first entry. She proposed a work in which three images of herself at different times in her life were combined with a gallery of other artists’ self-portraits (Opal Thirteen: compositional Sketch for Self-Portrait; Appendix Nine). Again, this seemed to reflect both the trend shown in her sketch submissions and one of my suggestions. That she was thinking along the same didactic lines of her previous work was clear in comment that her compositional idea was about “the great teachers of art and the study of art” (Opal, March 19, 1995).

My response to this was again to strive for a more refined focus or unity for her piece. I suggested that she find a theme to which she could connect. I was still aiming for a more expressive kind of art. At the least she should “try to use artists who somehow connect to you. You might do that by nationality, by gender or by style” (Collins, March 21, 1995).

NO 79



Self - Portrait
Rembrandt - 1668.
Hank 12/95.

Opal Nine: Copy from Rembrandt

6. 1485--1576.
 - Tiziano Vecellio - It. Venice
 Titian
 1550.



Jean - Auguste Ingres
 Ingres, 'Fr.

1804.

Ingres, 'Fr.

6. 1780 - 1867.

Opal Ten: Copies from Vecellio / Ingres



Opal Eleven: Copies from Durer, Van Dyck

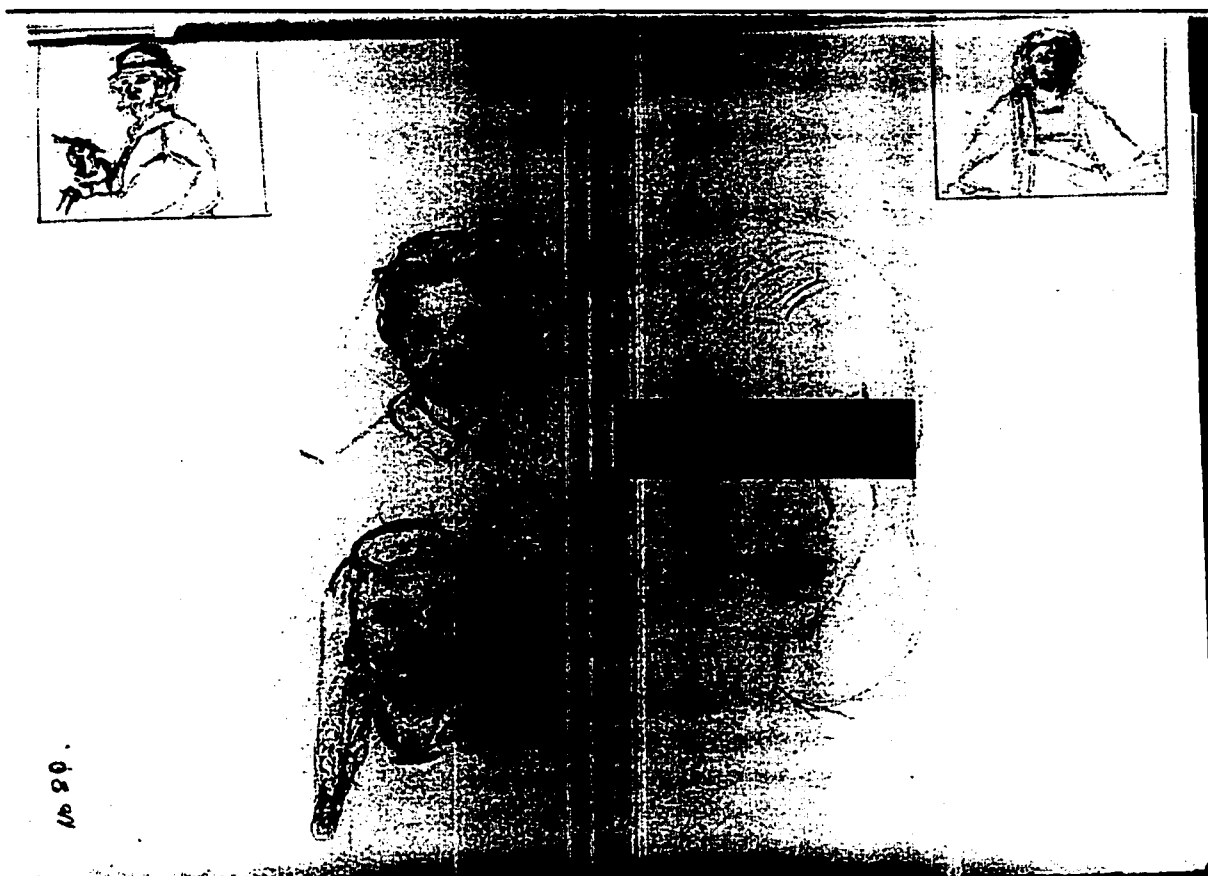


What I didn't quite see was that she was moving towards a teaching theme, that her self-portrait, like her previous map of Northern Ireland, would be a kind of demonstration of some historical "truth." In fact, it would be almost like a visual aid that a teacher would use to communicate some broad issue to her students.

In her following entry (Opal, March 28, 1995) Opal did respond to my suggestion that she connect with a theme such as gender to unify her drawing. It was however, in historical and not personal terms, e.g. She wrote: "Further to your suggestion of a unifying theme re: Gender . . . Canadian Women Artists . . . There were several Canadian women artists who were taught . . ." (Opal, March 28, 1995). Then there followed a brief historical review of early Canadian women artists.

Opal was not overly interested in using that material as a theme in her own work, however. She went on to point out that her plan was to unify her composition "with the self-portraits of the great master portrait painters" (Opal, March 28, 1995). What exactly this meant I could only deduce from our previous dialogues and Opal's sketches of what her final drawing might look like. It appeared that she wanted to place herself in a gallery of famous self-portrait painters including Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Holbein etc. This, it seemed to me, was not a reflection of some claim on Opal's part, but rather an attempt to explain how her own self-portrait fitted into an art historical tradition, an example of a general trend.

This seemed to me to be consistent with the way that Opal had worked in her previous assignment. It reflected my in-class admonitions to the whole group that they should be able to link what they did in the assignment with art historical precedents. It seemed again to be an outcome of our ongoing mutual reflection on Opal's visual material. However, I felt that she was about to place herself in a portrait gallery that was largely male. I noted that "I was struck by the absence of women, however" (Collins, March 28, 1995) in the sketches of the self-portraits that she had recently submitted. I suggested that she try to find other women artists with whom she could surround herself.



Opal Thirteen: Compositional Sketch for Self Portrait

This was still in line with my idea that her self-portrait should somehow be expressive of the inner person and not just of an historical trend, although I did think that it was an important trend for Opal to include. Her final image (Opal Fourteen: Final self-portrait), which came in the following week, did reflect that suggestion. However her main comment on her drawing was intended to show how it was linked to the art-historical tradition that she had expressed interest in from the beginning of our exchange.

She referred to artists like Rembrandt who had painted self-portraits as records. “My central theme is based on this idea, the child, the adult and the present mirror image” (Opal, April 1, 1995). She also identified “a self-portrait by Vincent Van Gogh, with three images” (Opal, April 1, 1995) as a source for her compositional idea. In line with my suggestion, she “selected four male and four female artists to balance the piece” (Opal, April 1, 1995).

Much of this second exchange sequence seemed consistent with the first both in the way Opal focused her solution to the assignment problem and in the way she responded to my interventions. In both cases she had produced drawings that were didactic, teaching devices almost, that made points about individual cases within historical trends. Her drawings were instances that illustrated generalizations.

In the end I did suggest to her that there was some loss of self-expression in this strategy. I also indicated that she should reflect a bit more on that aspect of her work. I felt, in a way, as we finished the dialogue around the assignments, that I was beginning to identify another level of difficulty in Opal’s work, and one about which we could have had a continued conversation.

Opal, in her follow-up summary, indicated that she had found the conversation useful. She spoke of how the dialogue had helped her to focus and how it had encouraged her to widen her art-historical knowledge base. I was glad that my emphasis on “focus” and on “simplicity” had helped her to develop her drawings. I was somewhat regretful that the weight of history, or so it seemed to me, had offset her own expressive options.



Opal Fourteen: Final Self Portrait

I reflected on how our exchange had worked itself out. Opal had not identified problems in her approach to her drawings or related research. Rather she had presented me with situations. I had then encouraged her to narrow her focus and I had encouraged what I saw as trends in her research, but mostly her sketches. She had adapted to these suggestions and had fairly quickly developed a compositional idea that she was able to execute for her final drawing in each case. She seemed to be compliant with my suggestions

In essence I had affirmed a principle of selectivity to solve a problem that I recognized: an abundance of material to work from within a short time frame. I did not really get at the deeper issue of how I saw Opal's work as expressive of herself until late in the second project. That was partly due to my desire to allow each student the opportunity to find their own goals and their own path. While I valued art as a means of personal expression it wasn't necessarily true that others might. As well, there was a certain way in which I thought Opal might have viewed some of the self-disclosure strategies that other students adopted as indiscreet. She didn't say so but she had been generally reserved during the classes.

In the first drawing assignment I had also ignored the expressive issue for reasons of my own. My own background had been shaped by a Southern Irish ancestry and by the stories attached to that. In my own way I was reluctant to broach the issue of Irish history in a situation where Opal, as the student was supposed to be free to develop and present her own viewpoint. A broad historical view of the establishment of Londonderry seemed appropriate to me in this context. At the same time, as chance would have it, I had used similar material in my own MFA studies to present a much more personal view of a part of that history, so I was open to that as a possible solution to the assignment. My feeling about what actually occurred was, as a consequence, both one of relief that I could avoid a personal view of the issue and of regret that such personal energy was not present in the art.

In the second assignment I thought that the idea of a self-portrait could open up an avenue for a rich reflection on one's life. Opal, as a mature student, had more life experience than the other students and I somehow expected that would play a larger role in her self-portrait proposal. Of course, I did encourage her art-historical approach, and so whatever the outcome, just as in my interchange with her around her "personal cultural background" drawing, what I chose to emphasize, or leave out, had, I believe, an impact on the final results.

In the end, whatever Opal's stories were, whatever my stories were, they functioned in the exchange more through their absence than their presence. The solutions she chose and the ones that I encouraged were, in that sense, a function of what was unspoken.

The shape, the "plot" (White, 1987) of our dialogue was, it seemed to me, a kind of standing-off from whatever feelings we both held in a more personal way about the assignment topics. It became somewhat abstract reflecting the abstract historical issues that Opal used to generate her drawings. Thus our exchange became didactic, much like those drawings.

E. Opal's interview

Opal was a mature student. She was in her later forties or early fifties, or so I thought. Her skill as a draughtsperson was at a lower level than most of the other students. Even so, she had maintained her sketchbook and had been diligent in her dialogue, albeit in a way that I had not seen as highly creative or reflective. I had my thoughts about what might have been the cause of that and I hoped to find out in the interview. I came to Opal with some trepidation because I had, in a way, criticized her in the narrative case study.

I began by asking her, as I had done in other interviews, if she found the narrative case study correct from her point of view. She said that she understood it but that she had two things that she wanted to know about. Then she proceeded to ask me questions about issues that I thought to some extent I had already answered months earlier, in my

presentations in the classroom where I asked for volunteers. As well, I thought I had covered them in the process of teaching the course. Her approach to these questions was somewhat aggressive and antagonistic, but I had the sense that, in fact, she was nervous and perhaps afraid of the situation. She reminded me of Alice, who also resisted the follow-up interview though in a different manner.

First, she wanted to know about the other two sites, though I had done some description of these in the class two years previous. I gave her a quick summary of what had happened at Concordia and Sheridan. This led to another question. "So you're interested in narrative in art?" I began to feel that the interview was not going as I wanted, and that Opal was trying to keep me off balance to protect herself.

I pointed out to her that all of the assignments in the course had some reference to narrative in them, although I had not set the assignments. I told her that I had come into the course after it was designed and was constrained more or less to teach it as it was. Opal's somewhat sharp response was that she hadn't known these things were part of the course. It was clear to me that she was preparing a case to defend herself against my criticisms. She wanted to know how the assignments got into the course and told her, truthfully, that they were there when I came along, as part of an approved curriculum.

Then we got to the point. Opal said, "You said my work was more didactic . . .". I confirmed that. Then she went on to say that she had thought that there was narrative in both of them. I confirmed that there were narrative elements in her drawings but that the outcome, as I saw it, was didactic. All of this time I was being careful to be somewhat neutral and friendly. Even so, Opal remained anxious. Then she said, again defensively, "The other thing was you said that you didn't think that I expressed myself."

I felt we were at the heart of the matter and I now asked her to say something about how she saw expression in artwork.

Opal then launched her defense.

“I think I expressed myself in terms of my interest, what I liked. I like the historical aspect, so, in that, I expressed me. I had an interest in the self-portrait. I chose to do three stages . . . something that I wanted. Did you not think that expressed me as a changing person?”

I found myself in a bit of a dilemma for, in fact, Opal had expressed herself, but in what I saw as a limited manner. I tried to explain that.

“Your self-portrait showed a child, a young woman, a mature woman. The three images [were] surrounded by portraits of other artists. Those three images expressed your development within the context of an art historical tradition and practice. From my point of view, they didn’t reveal a lot about you . . . You were like the other artists . . . This doesn’t mean that it doesn’t express you, but it does mean that it is an expression that is more abstract.”

Opal wanted to know if she should have done something different. Again I felt the dilemma. I replied that it wasn’t a question of “shoulds”. Then I asked her again to say something about what she understood to be expression in art.

Opal relied. “I didn’t feel enough that I wanted to do anything social or cultural . . . I didn’t feel I was old enough or experienced enough to criticize artists . . .” Opal’s voice trailed off. “Some of the girls [in the class] put things that included their parents or even some personal thing in their lives that was important to them. I don’t feel like doing that.”

Now that I saw that the interview was beginning to get down to the issues that Opal had been concerned about. I countered with a remark that I had made in the narrative case study that she had read. I noted that I had written “that I found you to be a discreet person. I thought that you might find other (students) to be indiscreet.”

And Opal said, “Yes, very!”

This confirmed my awareness that Opal was concerned about the autobiographical nature of the assignments that she had to do during the DJSB and in the class. She was “not interested” in them, although that seemed a weak way of putting a strong feeling. Typically she had not expressed strong feeling during her participation in the exchange as did the other students. She set limits, as had Sharon, for example.

I shifted the conversation trying to get her to see another approach to her “Personal Cultural History” image. I asked her about Northern Ireland where she had been born. She told me, somewhat anxiously, “I didn’t feel a part of that. I was born there; then I moved, I married a Chinese man and came to Canada.” In the narrative case study I had revealed that I was Irish. She asked me how I handled my experience of that. I told her that I had linked my work (in my MFA) “to Michael Collins the Irish Republican figure. I chose images in his life and I made images from them. It was . . . at a distance [from my own life] but expressive through the imagery and style.”

Opal again commented that “Some of these kids amaze me by the things they would discuss, very indiscreet.” She set her jaw slightly as she said that.

Then began a process in which she slowly revealed some aspects of her personal narrative that were connected to her work and which, if she had brought them into the dialogue, could have taken her images in a different direction. I asked if she had any memories of her childhood when she was working on her map for the PCH assignment.

At first she said no. Then she told me that she had been given the maps she worked with from her brother to her some years ago. Next, she noted that “I did enjoy drawing the walls of the city . . . Now that might bring back memories. I lived near the walls till I was . . . Our church was beneath the walls. My aunt had a house on the walls. You went through the gates [to get to it]. I enjoyed playing on the walls.”

I pointed out that this kind of material, which had been missing from our original dialogue, to her was story-like and from her personal narrative. I also reminded myself

that other participants (like Hubert, for example) had not brought personal narrative issues that were related to their art making forward into the DJSB exchange, but had resisted in a way similar to Opal's.

Opal wasn't one to take advantage of this opening and went back to the portrait project about which she said, "I felt maybe I relied a bit too much on your suggestions." Again there was a sense of blaming here, though it was also somewhat ambivalent. I had asked her to look into women artists, and she had a sense that she had gotten off track in her project because of that.

Then she suddenly said, "I've asked all my questions." I hadn't however so I pushed on aware that the sparring match that this interview had become would also go on in some way. I felt more confident however because she had told me a bit about her life "playing on the walls."

I asked her how she felt when I had mentioned in the narrative case study that I had a Southern Irish background. Opal said, with a half-smile, that she "thought that was sneaky." I pushed a bit further and asked her if I had brought that into the original DJSB exchange would it have changed things? She thought that it "might have brought out [her] defenses." Then again she repeated that I was the teacher and that I knew where I was going. She said: "We're just first-year students . . . We don't know." She went on to say that "I was brought up to see the teacher as right, you understand . . . but when students today don't agree with the teacher . . . they say it . . . I think this is how children are about that today."

This readjusted the frame of reference of the interview somewhat. Opal did have some disagreements with me, but to express them went against her background. This, I thought, made her seem shifty and, at times, aggressive when she did speak of those contested issues. Other participants had also contested my position, but they had done so more collegially because they felt less threatened and because, as Opal had said, that is how "children are about that today." They did not have to overcome a kind of negative

training that Opal had undergone, in another time and another place, regarding the role of the teacher.

We went back to the political issues and the issue of feminism. I asked her what she thought would have happened if I had encouraged political discussion of the art made by the class. She said: "That might have been too personal . . ." though she did note her liking for some feminist art and for some political artists.

Then, because I perceived this as a lack, I asked her about the role of problem finding and solving in the DJSB and in her work. She described her process.

"I do research to look at all aspects and then sort of decide . . . through sketches, or maybe through your suggestions, to focus on one thing . . . Maybe I wouldn't have been able to do that without a few suggestions. I had too much material . . ." Then we got back to the portrait project and Opal was clearer on how she saw my role and her "getting off track." She seemed less threatened at this point. During the DJSB I had suggested that she look at women artists. Opal now said: "It was a good suggestion . . . [but] I think that's where I got off track . . . I lost track of my original idea, which was to show portraits of artists from the beginning. I couldn't find women artists who [were portrait painters] . . . I had to stretch it a lot . . . [If] I had concentrated on women in art, it [the finished work] might have been better."

She noted that she had read "Our Hidden Heritage" recently and that now, knowing the history of women in art, she might have done the project differently. I said that she had done a very thorough job of her research based on what I had recommended she read. She then went on to say that: "Keeping the sketchbook and doing a lot of reading helped me to learn a lot." This was an admission that she had found the process useful, especially in helping her become aware of new information and viewpoints.

I asked her if she thought that her cultural attitudes towards her past teachers had influenced the dialogue. She noted that she was brought up "to be receptive . . . If the

student is not receptive you can't get anything done." She set this against the ideas of mutual or reciprocal reflection, which I had talked about in the case study narrative. I could see clearly, from my perspective, why she would have difficulty with a DJSB exchange with a teacher, whether he was from Southern Ireland or anywhere else

I tried to push this topic a bit, referring to her experience as a mother (I had met one of her sons briefly when he turned up to help her move her art work at the end of the year). I asked Opal if teaching was like nurturing. She was a bit reluctant again to make a comparison, though she said that there was some similarity. Then she got onto another area where she felt somewhat threatened.

In the case study narrative, I had written about the idea of plot as a shaping force in the DJSB exchange. I had presented this idea in the case study I had given her to read. She wanted to know again in her somewhat tense and argumentative manner what I had meant by using that word. She asked: "When you used the word plot...did you know what would happen consciously?" I told her that I did not, and that I had to live through the experience of the DJSB just as she had to do. She wasn't satisfied with that and seemed to think that I had planned the outcome of the whole thing. "In a book," she said, "the plot is not revealed to the reader but the writer knows ahead of the end." I noted that perhaps I was using the word a bit more loosely than in the true literary sense but that "after everything is done, you can look back and see a shape . . . or project a shape" onto what's happened. I noted that in our exchange that "there were certain themes that neither of us was going to talk about and that made our relationship didactic." I asked her again if she agreed with that and she said she did.

Then I told her a story about my grandfather but this failed to distract Opal from the topic of plot. She wanted to know about three approaches I had mentioned in the case study narrative that could characterize a DJSB exchange: didactic, dramatic, autobiographical. I noted that there were others as well, and then I said that: "because we didn't talk about the autobiographical and political issues [in the DJSB exchange] our relationship became didactic. I taught . . . you responded appropriately."

Opal, like a clever debater, asked: “Shouldn’t you be didactic as a teacher?” I noted that sometimes that was true and that I was not pointing out a fault in her, which seemed to be her fear. Rather I was just trying to characterize the situation. Opal seemed to have felt she had made her point and commented with a slight smile “I just wanted to ask.”

She then had some querulous question about OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education). I had mentioned this in the case study. Then, somewhat to my surprise since I had outlined this to her several times she said abruptly: “What is the purpose of this interview?” In a way I felt that I was with a cranky child but I repeated what I had said at the beginning of the interview, that I really wanted to find out if there was anything wrong with my construction of what happened. She went back to the issue of whether or not she had expressed herself. She said, “I thought I did, even if I’d not done exactly what I thought I’d done.”

I reiterated to her that I had been thinking of emotional expression and not expression of ideas or thoughts when I wrote up the case study narrative. As well, I noted that I was happy to include her comments. She then corrected me on one of the names she had used in describing her ancestors in the “Personal Cultural History” project. Then we discussed who, if any, of her ancestors had gone to Londonderry as volunteers or tenants.

We had a brief discussion of maps and she asked me about the invention of longitude and latitude but I was unable to help her with that query, and the interview came to an end. We never got around to the question of her continuing art practice. She was still a student, albeit part time. I met her about a year later in one of the studios. She was painting from a photograph and she told me that was what she really liked to do. It seemed unlikely that a reflective sketchbook practice would fit into that.

Opal was unlike most of the other participants in that she did not confirm my views and then suggest revisions, but actively disputed them. In fact much of the interview was a kind of sparring match in which she sought to overturn my interpretation and restore her

sense of self from her viewpoint. Thus the interview was something of an ordeal for me and, I thought, probably for Opal as well. In the process she had revealed a key issue in her background that explained, at least in part, why the projects and the DJSB had been as they had been. She had been trained to be “receptive” and to take the teacher’s word for granted as the truth. However, it was also clear as a grown woman that she had her own ideas and purposes, and that there was some contradiction between being able to express those and her background. She had things to say, but she also had to get along with the teacher. She seemed compliant and apparently accepted my suggestions; however when they didn’t work out for the best, she tended to see the situation as my fault, or one in which she had fallen into a trap set by a “teacher.”

As well, she was, as I had said, a discreet person. She did not, as did my other younger students, adhere to the confessional style of art making (the therapeutic approach that Bellah has discussed (Bellah et al, 1986)) that the other students so readily embraced. She wanted to be private in her art making, an approach which I tended to find somewhat incommensurate with the projects, and indeed with post-modern art making. This was bound to create problems in the DJSB as well. It certainly led to our mutual misunderstanding of “expression” in art. Interestingly enough she responded quite well to my suggestions that she consider gender issues in her work, but she clearly did not have enough time to find away to absorb that into her work. From the interview however it seemed as if she might continue to explore that issue.

Opal did have her own stories, as the interview revealed. If she had been able to bring them forward in the DJSB, she would have had other options in her art making for reflection and, I believe, for creative reverie-like processes. Some of these seemed to emerge in her interview with me as she discussed her memories about the city walls. Thus, as with the other participants, the interview continued the DJSB exchange-both positively and negatively

I saw that the problems that had characterized her original exchange with me were even more clearly pronounced in the interview. However, I was encouraged that she felt that

she could now disagree with me, even if it cost her something in “tone.” That seemed to suggest that, even though she still felt that I should be the teacher, there was a chance that I was wrong and that she was right.

Her anxiety around this and her aggressive attempts to make her point did not make the interview as enjoyable for me as interviews were with most other participants. As well, some information (e.g. on text image relationships) fell away in the *melée*. In the end I came away feeling that I had been dealing with some left over issues from Opal’s childhood, and some grievances that she no doubt felt about having to go along with her teachers who most likely were not always right, at least from her point of view.

I was also struck by the fact that I had treated her much as I had every one else in the class when it was clear that she was different. I reflected that perhaps I could have reached her earlier, or brought out her conflicts around her learning situations earlier, and thus moved the DJSB to another level. We had, however, done some of that in the interview; I thought that, as with Sharon, perhaps such an opening up could only come at that point, after time had passed and Opal had other successes as a student and artist.

F. The narrative of the DJSB exchange with Sal: little people

In his first entry (February 9, 1993) just before the beginning of Reading Week, Sal was following an established procedure when he presented me with a sheet of preliminary idea sketches for a drawing that was to reflect his personal cultural history (Sal One: Details for Personal Cultural History Project). Sal did not submit a text with this work. This was a bit of an ongoing issue with Sal. He had been somewhat reserved in his in class comments regarding his own and other students’ work. At the same time, his drawings completed for the previous assignments had generally been of high quality. Sal did not indicate any particular problems at this point in developing his images or his composition.

British, American
Indian American



Sal One: Details for Personal Cultural History Project

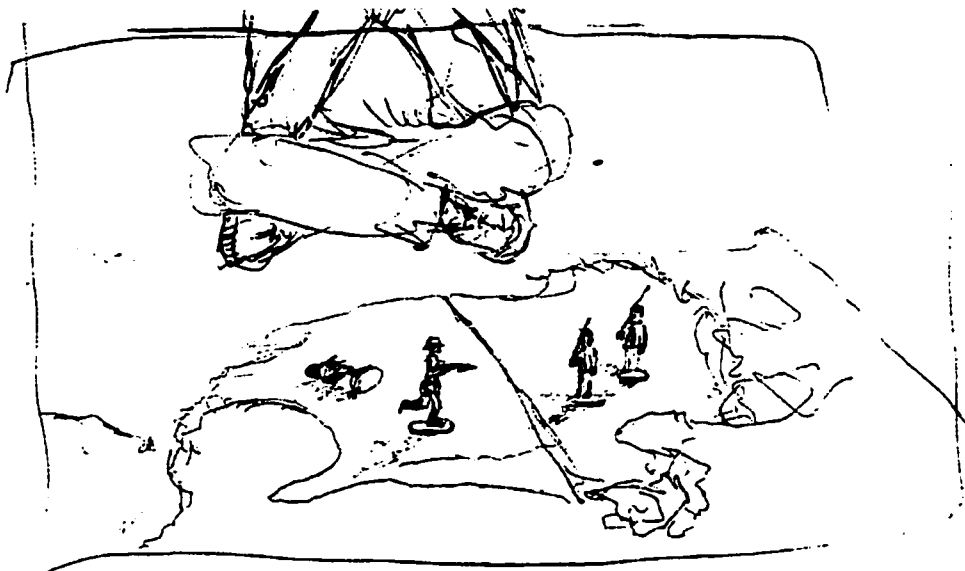
What I was most aware of was the way that stories, both historical and familial, supported his work. Although he did not bring any of these forward directly, the historical references that he suggested (e.g. such events as the British (Canadian)-American War of 1812) seemed to underlie his approach. He did not describe any particular family situations that supported his work though the presence of childhood memories around toy soldiers was suggested. There was also the narrative of the kind of work that Sal had been engaged in over the year. One of his themes, as I reminded him in my response, had been that of interactions between big figures and small ones. This idea here was a part of that narrative of the development of Sal's art and "the theme (big-small) that you have used in some of your other work" (Collins, February 9, 1995). Sal had also developed a clearly symbolic and illustrational approach to the projects that I had assigned. His sketches continued that aspect of his work.

Thus I identified a series of narrative levels in the work that Sal had presented to me. In my comments to him I tried to suggest a more direct engagement with those personal and historical levels of narrative.

There was some delay in my getting Sal's next entry, due to a Reading Week interruption and then some problems I had with arranging my time so that I could write in-class responses. When I finally got to Sal's next entry I found that he was having a problem. This time he presented me with his sketches but also his questions about what to do next.

These sketches had carried his idea forward to a compositional stage (Sal Two: Composition and Details; Three: Sketches). This was also consistent with the practice that I had been asking the students to follow in their assignments throughout the year. They were to research their images for the first week of the project and then they were to suggest compositions in the second week before going onto finished work.

Sal's compositional sketches picked up on the 'war idea' suggested in his previous submission; he included an image of a young boy playing with toy soldiers. In another of these compositional sketches the soldiers were shooting at the boy.



I think
 Clark - the name
 has something
 to do with
 warriors so the
 by soldiers
 is in with that



- I don't like the idea
 of the figure in the
 background - just the
 map and the figures
 on the ground are
 probably enough
 to show what
 I want

- this will leave
 the background
 kind of empty
 black and I
 don't know what
 now what I'd
 use good to fill
 it up with -

Sal Two: Composition and Details

Sal was bothered by the figure of the boy that seemed a “natural” part of this narrative piece; he wanted to take it out but was conflicted about this and wrote: “I don’t know right now what would be good to fill it up with” (Sal, February, 27, 1995). Sal was “stuck” and I began suggesting alternative solutions to his problem. I was led partly by compositional considerations in this, but also by a desire to see Sal bring this idea of the toy soldiers more directly into the “storied” realm of his family and of history. For example I suggested that he include “Xeroxes of your family photos collaged or transferred (rhoplexed) to the sheet of paper” (Collins, February 27, 1995).

From this retrospective vantage point, it strikes me that I did not set out a compositional principle by which Sal might proceed to choose/develop a solution. I had, in the first semester, spent some time on design and composition theory, directing my students to A Primer of Visual Literacy (Dondis, 1973) and I could have again referred to that text. By this time I had a sense of Sal as a fairly skilled artist-in-the-making. Even so, I feel that I missed an opportunity to refer my comments to that text, or to some specific compositional strategy. This would have made my response more widely applicable at the level of composition.

What I did give him was a list of possibilities that he could use as he tried to solve his “problem.” Some of these were focused on encouraging him to make the stories of his family more a part of the work. Others (and here I did some sketching) were designed to help him with the compositional space.

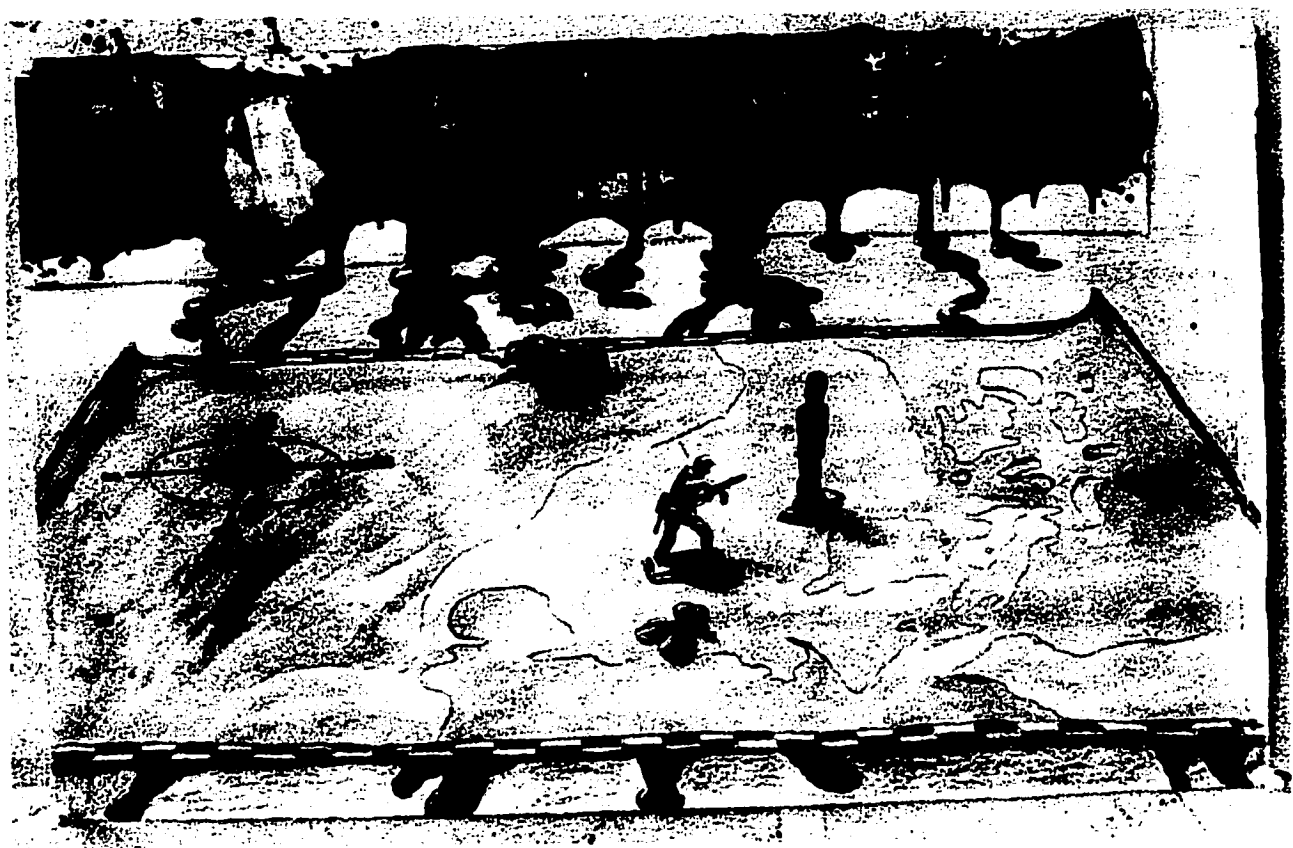
This whole process of writing my response was taking place rather quickly in a somewhat chaotic classroom where students were drawing in ink on large sheets of paper, on the floor, with brushes with four-foot handles. The students were anxious about the process and so was I, partly about their need for reassurance that what they were doing was “OK” and my concern that they not spill ink or water on their work or those of other students. Perhaps that was partly why I opted for a more pragmatic approach to Sal’s concerns than I might have in a less frazzling situation.

Sal did make some effort to link the subject matter of toy soldiers at war, to himself in a more autobiographical way. He suggested that his (actual) name had “something to do with warriors so the toy soldiers tie in with that” (Sal, February 27, 1995). He didn’t make any attempt to link that to stories of his childhood, as his images suggested he could, or to real historical conflicts such as the 1812 war between the Americans and the British. As far as Sal was concerned such stories were strictly in the background.

The next week when he presented the final work he had placed references to the stories of his family in the background of the drawing (Sal Four: Final personal cultural history project). Sal had placed a row of photocopied family photos along the upper part of the drawing. It was as if they were on the baseboard of the wall of the room in which the action was taking place, suggesting an imagined audience of the events transpiring. Here he had, in essence, adopted one of my suggestions that was meant to have him bring his family stories more into the drawing and in a way that would solve his compositional problem. As Sal said: “I adopted the idea of using the photo-images of my family to complete the composition” (Sal, March 6, 1995).

I had mixed feelings about this. Sal had taken one of the six ideas I had suggested and he had adapted it as he saw fit to produce a compelling drawing. This seemed to suggest a successful exchange had taken place between us around his “problem” with the work. As well, the solution that he chose made the work more expressive of his “personal cultural” background.

On the other hand, our exchange had taken place over such a short period of time that it felt as if neither he nor I had much time to consider other possibilities. In a way I thought Sal and his process had demonstrated a somewhat attenuated version of reflective thinking. He had identified a problem, he had presented it to me and I had tried to help him solve it with a series of suggestions that included sketching. I had not referred him to a compositional principle in this process, but had emphasized the idea that his drawing



Sal Four: Final Personal Cultural History Project

should reflect the stories of his family and/or the history of the ethnic groups involved. This seemed to have had some effect on his final choice for the solution to his problem. I returned to this idea of linking the compositional solution to stories of Sal's personal and cultural past in my final comments. I said: "The toy soldiers carry the story both back into childhood and into the history of Canada - U.S. relations, British - German relations (Collins, March 6, 1995). In a way I was making "telling the story" the principle that I wanted Sal to follow as he tried to work out his drawing solution through whatever moves he found necessary.

Sal did have another enigmatic comment on a feature of his work: "The soldier who had fallen over like he was shot was just to add interest to the composition" (Sal, March 6, 1995).

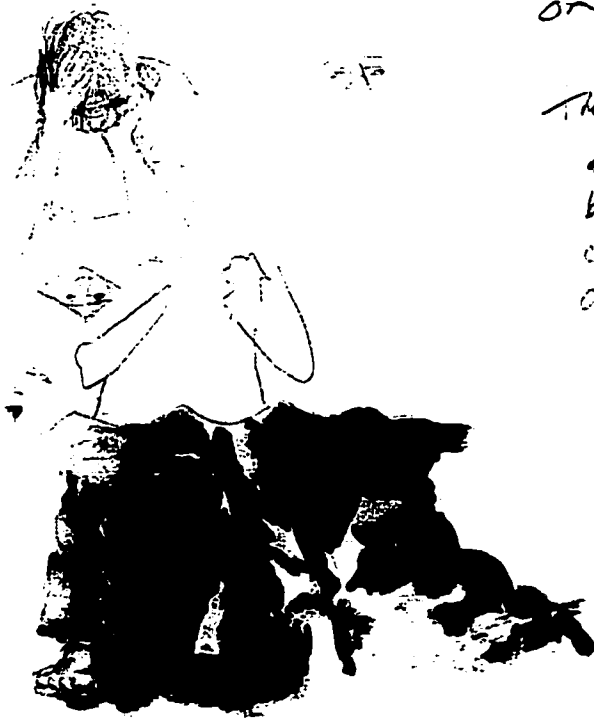
What he meant by that I wasn't quite sure, but it suggested that he, in his own right, was interested in exploring certain dramatic, storytelling aspects of this particular drawing.

When we moved on to the next assignment Sal was to exploit such dramatic possibilities further by adapting a literary model for his self-portrait drawing. This was a project in which the students were to create a self-portrait. Through my class discussions I hoped to direct their research towards past and current traditions of the self-portrait.

In his first (and as I pointed out earlier only) submission to me on this project, Sal imagined himself as "Gulliver" from Dafoe's Gulliver's Travels (Sal Five: Sketches for self-portrait project; Sal: Six: Compositional sketches for self-portrait). He wrote "I'd like to do an image of a person, me I guess, with a whole bunch of little figures swarming around him, kind of like Gulliver's Travels" (Sal, March 20, 1995). This comment accompanied his images, some of which were detail studies and some of which were compositional sketches. There were some choices to be made between the compositional ideas but Sal did not identify any real problem with that.



I'd like to do an image of
a person, the I stress with
a whole bunch of little
figures swarming around him
kind of like Cruller's travel
← In these cases I think
a bunch of little figures
approaching the larger
figure and climbing up
on him would be neat



The Natives are:

- a: Restless
- b: not really natives
- c: about to get flattened
- d: all of the above

Sal Five: Sketches for Self Portrait Project



Sal Six: Sketches for self-Portrait Composition

He had Dafoe's story as source for his idea and he had some compositional ideas. When I finally got around to making a response to this entry much time had passed and there was only a week or so before Sal was to submit his final drawing. This was not Sal's fault. It represented my over-extension in terms of my job commitments, e.g. doing a project that took up more of my class time than I had expected, and fulfilling a commitment to deliver a paper at an academic conference. It meant, however, that this exchange never really had time to take on a narrative shape that was clearly connected to the development of Sal's drawing, nor to reflect any problem solving in that process.

I could have picked up on Sal's big-small strategy, which he had employed in a couple of other pieces and was using here. Some discussion of that as a "principle" of composition could have been useful.

I did make one comment directed at clarifying Sal's theme. This was sparked by Sal's use of a multiple-choice question that he wanted attached to his drawing, and by his different compositional sketches. I asked him if his drawing represented "a person captured, as Gulliver was, or is it a person just bothered by these little people as if by flies?" (Collins, March 30, 1995).

In his final drawing (Sal Seven: Final self-portrait) Sal seemed to have opted for the first of these two as he showed the head and upper body of himself asleep and tied down by the Lilliputians. He also linked this ironically to his own position as a student by attaching the multiple-choice exam question. It was a nice shift of his drawing narrative from Gulliver to himself directly.

On the other hand, the narrative regarding this second exchange between Sal and me was de-centered from the actual drawing assignment by my own life story both within and beyond the class. And yet, Sal survived quite well and produced a nice piece of work. This was his sixth assignment with me, and by now he had a keen sense of what I was asking him to do. As well, he had already had two previous successful dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges with me, one of which I have reported on here.



Sal Seven: Final Self Portrait Project

This suggests to me that the previous work we had done together was enough of a framework for him to complete this project successfully as well.

On the whole Sal seemed to find the dialogue journal sketchbook exchanges helpful when he “was stuck or couldn’t decide what to do” (Sal, April 5, 1995). This opened up a way for some mutual reflection on the problem at hand. My responses to Sal “provided helpful ideas” (Sal, April 5, 1995) that he was able to adapt to his own purposes, his own moves in developing his compositions. Thus the ongoing exchange encouraged Sal in his own self-reflective practice. He thought “more about my work and the development process just due to the constant exchange/input of ideas and sketches” (Sal, April 5, 1995).

The exchange, at least in general, seemed successful in encouraging Sal’s creative reflection on his work. However, from my viewpoint it seemed somewhat less successful in terms of the development of its own narrative shape through Sal’s drawing process. The last exchange between Sal and me broke down somewhat, and consequently there were fewer opportunities for reflection. This problem was unique in the DJSB exchanges.

As well there was less encouragement for Sal to write about his work. This, I believe, is something that he needed to work on, not just for the sake of this exercise but in terms of building a self-supported reflective practice for the future. In my final comments I pointed that out to him: “I do think that you would benefit from more writing about your ideas”(Collins, April 5, 1995). Particularly I noted that “periodic summaries [would help] to bring your ideas to a conclusion” (Collins, April 5, 1995). However I was aware that more practice in the exchange that we had carried on would have done more to confirm this activity than any admonitions might. Sal, like other participants, did note that writing followed the image making and acted to solidify or explain the images.

There were few stories, on my side and on his, that might have expanded the narrative of our exchange. I did bring forward some stories about my own art practice in the in-class discussions but there seemed scant opportunity to insert any of these into my direct

exchanges with Sal. Certainly, his piece with the toy soldiers made me think about how I had played with similar toys when I was young. I had always imbued such play with dramatic tales. Sal did not seem to do so in any direct way though he clearly was referencing the historical narratives of British-American relations.

How that piece was tied into his stories of his childhood, or to the stories about the family represented by the photocopies never came directly into play in our exchange. However, I found the drawing haunting, and it was for that reason, I think, that in my final comments I suggested that he try to bring some of his “own expressive needs” to his drawing process (Collins, April 5, 1995).

There was more of a direct sense of a story in his “Gulliver” piece since it drew upon that literary model. It was also linked to his life as a student and perhaps, through his use of a personal academic document, to specific experiences that he had with the university bureaucracy. While the nature of that latter event was clearly indicated by the situation that Sal depicted in the drawing (i.e., Gulliver’s capture by the Lilliputians) the events remained unspecified.

On the whole I found the experience somewhat frustrating, although I was pleased that Sal had done some very good drawings over the course. As well, he seemed to have reacted to problem situations in the assigned work and to my input much as any student might. That he had been relatively successful in his drawings and that he was aware that the dialogue journal exchanges had helped him become increasingly self-reflective about his work is probably all that a teacher should expect in a large first year studio class with typical interruptions.

At the same time I can’t help feeling that our exchange could have been richer if I had more time to pursue certain issues. I did set it up so that I would have to respond to the students in the class rather than later at my leisure. That did provide more direct feedback for students most of the time, but when the system broke down as it did in Sal’s last project there was no way to make up for the lost contact. In my other projects, at other

sites, where I took the student entries away to write my comments they got their responses later; but, if they submitted an entry, they always got a comment within a week, and I had more time to think about the implications of what they had drawn and written.

Not every narrative runs smoothly; not every part of a research project follows along exactly as one would hope. Here I felt that external circumstance, my own way of setting up the exchange and Sal's somewhat restrained mode of communication all combined to disrupt the story. Perhaps that was because I came to this as my third project bringing plots from the other two sites with me. I had a set of expectations and was not completely prepared for another kind of story to emerge.

G. Sal's interview

Sal was the most parsimonious of all of the participants in his text and sketchbook imagery. His interview was also somewhat briefer than the others and perhaps a bit laconic. I met with him at his family home in a small town north of Toronto. It was tastefully decorated in an early Ontario period style.

I began by asking what he had thought of the DJSB process. From his point of view "it was really good. I had never had experience with that before. [I liked] the frequency of the comments . . . there was more opportunity to get input . . . I think it was good because I tend to do and not to think. It was interesting to see what you thought. I kinda never realized what I was thinking. When I hear someone else say what I'm thinking [then] I'm there."

This led me to ask Sal if "I was putting words in your head."

Sal, like Alida, said that he "was coming to something [himself] and I was helping [him]." He thought there was a balance between my input and what he wanted to do. He had felt that "he had total freedom" though I pointed out to him that he had been

constrained by the project topics. This was all right from his point of view. "For me [it was] a starting point you can move from, especially in first year." By the last project Sal had felt that as a result of the DJSB he could "go on and think on [his] own."

All of this seemed positive to me, and in line with my initial perception [from the early text and image coding process] of Sal's activity in the DJSB. I began to talk about structure in the exchange. I was getting at both the idea of problem finding and solving and the idea of an overall shape to the DJSB. I asked Sal if he had a sense of the evolution of his ideas. He said that "if I get an idea I'll go with it . . . if I don't like it I'll drop it. I don't have too much patience for ideas."

I had some problems being totally present to Sal during the DJSB exchange but this didn't seem to have been a problem for him. He said that the very fact that the DJSB was there was the key thing. He preferred the written responses as well because with that he "could go back to it." He then said that "It was amazing to read the case study narrative . . . the details of my sketchbook . . . the description of everything as it was laid out on the page . . . I had totally forgotten." Here again, as with the other participants, it seemed that reading the case study narrative had provided Sal with some insight into the event. It had a shape or form, though Sal was more accepting of what the case study represented than was Opal, for example.

I then asked Sal how stories came into his work. Sal noted that his personal cultural history piece "had a lot of historical background . . . but it wasn't what I was trying to come to . . . I was trying to represent childhood." I noted that the piece had a serious nature to it in spite of his contention that he had wanted it to be light-hearted. I also noted themes I had seen in his work, which I had mentioned in the case study, of "big vs little." Sal hadn't been aware of that, he said, though he noted that he had always liked "models . . . toy soldiers . . . the details." He hadn't quite known what his images meant, but he said that he felt that it was good to know these things because "people are going to interpret your work . . . it looks kinda silly not knowing what it's about." This seemed to

me to be a vote in favor of reflective thinking in the creative process, even if it was motivated by a social concern.

He went on to say that for his second piece in the DJSB projects, the self-portrait project, he chose “Gulliver’s Travels” as a source because “he liked the idea of the little people . . . I just thought it was interesting.” I had a sense that he was operating on intuition, much like Sharon, but that he was partially aware of his interest being connected somehow to his childhood. It seemed that our conversation was filling in some of the details that had been left out of the DJSB and refining my awareness of Sal’s personal narrative context.

I asked him why he had chosen the incident of Gulliver being captured by the Lilliputians and being tied down, especially since the project was a self-portrait. Sal said that he had just gone “with my instincts. I didn’t put too much structured thought into it.” Again I was reminded of both Sharon and of Joey R. Both were proceeding somewhat intuitively like Sal, and both had given me a sense that they were withholding some information as they went. In the former cases it turned out to be true. With Sal it was unclear whether he was withholding information from me, or from himself.

He wasn’t too sure what it all meant to him. He did tell me that, as a child, he had a 3D viewer slide disc of the Lilliputian incident. He had also had a storybook about Gulliver and the Lilliputians. All of this seemed to connect the basic imagery of the work more clearly to Sal’s personal narrative though in a somewhat impersonal manner.

Sal had attached a section of multiple-choice questions from a psychology test to his “Gulliver” drawing. This, he now said, indicated that the multiple-choice idea carried over to the drawing. “It was me trying to tell people that the drawing could be interpreted in a number of ways . . . You’re going to interpret things . . . but you might be wrong.” Again there were echoes here of Joey R. Sal went on to say that at the time he “was becoming more aware of the way people interpret stuff,” and, I thought, beginning (like Joey R) to resist those interpretations.

I asked Sal if he had been aware of telling a story in his work. He said that he hadn't, that he had "never thought of telling a story. I was showing you a scene."

I began an interrogation of Sal's personal cultural history drawing which had shown two toy soldiers facing each other in a "threatening manner" on opposite sides of the Canadian-American border. There was also the image of a third soldier who fallen down. I asked him if this had something personal to it. He noted, as he had at the time of the DJSB, that the toy soldiers represented respective ethnic backgrounds. The German soldier stood for his mother and the British soldier, his father. Sal had told me that his father and mother were separated and I asked him somewhat indirectly if the drawing represented that. He said that if it did it was predictive because they had separated after he had made the drawing.

I had a sense that it might have been so, or at least that Sal's symbolic images had represented the real wars that he had felt between his parents as he was growing up. I felt somewhat as I had with Hubert and his story about the loss of his mother, or Joey R and his images of rebellion. I asked Sal about the fallen soldier; he replied: "I was trying to make the composition more interesting." He said that he could see now how that made the piece more narrative, but he did not indicate anything else. From my perspective (though I realized that I could be projecting) it seemed that the fallen soldier probably represented himself, a casualty in his parent's war.

I didn't feel it was quite right to put him on the spot about the issue. From Sal's viewpoint, much like Joey R, he was "just doing what I wanted to."

I remarked that: "narrative theory says that people tell stories to give their lives meaning." I asked Sal about the "big-little" theme again. He said that, at the time, the DJSB "process was more an exchange of ideas. I didn't realize I had a program". He went on to say that in his later classes (second year) he had seen some connections in ideas or approaches, but not too much. As he put it, "At least I don't see it."

This seemed to be the case for Sal. He did say that he was gradually becoming aware of the story-telling as part of his pieces but he “wasn’t as aware of it [during the DJSB] as I am now.”

I then asked him a bit more about my interpretation or construction of the DJSB exchanges. Sal replied: “The way you were looking at it seemed a little more structured than it was in my mind. They [the sketches] were less structured than you seemed to be interpreting them. They were just detailed studies for the composition. And I think some of them might have even just been doodles . . . I just made doodles . . . Yeah . . . It wasn’t necessarily linked to the composition in my mind.” This reminded me of Marie’s comments, but on a somewhat less developed level.

I noted that perhaps I was reading into them. Sal replied that my interpretations “were valid. I wasn’t even conscious at the time [of the patterns] but I saw it afterwards.”

We talked a bit about some confusion I had in interpreting his sketches, but Sal indicated that hadn’t been a problem for him. I began to talk about some of his other work that was not a part of the project, relating it to the work done in the DJSB and identifying another compositional theme that seemed to run through the pieces. I said to Sal, “What I am doing here is what I did during the dialogue saying here’s how I see a theme ...”

Sal said he could see my interpretation as valid even though he hadn’t been planning that particular strategy which I had described as “a more general scene and one element broken away from it to create some visual activity.” I was still thinking of Sal and his family but I continued to state what I saw in abstract or compositional terms related to his work.

I noted that Sal was not very talkative in the DJSB. He didn’t really have a reason for that lack. He said: “I can’t really explain that . . . I thought the DJSB was quite fine. I guess I’m basically not too talkative. I found your comments to be quite good. The longer

descriptions gave me time to think. I'm slow to think." This seemed to be in line with my experience of Sal during the DJSB and helped to explain his laconic approach to the text exchanges.

Sal then said that he had kept sketchbooks over the past academic year and that he had written in them a bit but not too much. We discussed a number of minor issues: the history aspects of his PCH drawing, his view of Canada, some sketches that were in his sketchbook but not directly related to the final two pieces. Then we talked again about his self-portrait and the addition of the section from the psychology test. He said that the original text had said "suffering from a growth hormone, not suffering from a growth hormone." I thought this was apposite for a piece on Gulliver and the Lilliputians. What reference it might have to Sal's life I wasn't sure.

I thought, however, of Alida's piece, which had used "framing" as device to focus on her experience of both her past and her immediate life. I had a sense that Sal was combining both his memories of childhood, the story images he had seen then, and his current feelings about being grown up enough to be in first year of University. Like Alida's piece, which tried to work out where she stood on that issue, Sal's seemed to be doing the same, or at least expressing his anxiety about the process. I felt that I had missed something in the original DJSB exchange, perhaps because of the interruptions that had occurred in Sal's situation, and now I was getting a deeper sense of what the drawing had been about. Sal seemed less aware of this than had Alida, and I did not push my "interpretation."

Then we talked briefly about his sense of where the DJSB would be most useful to him if he was continuing it into his current studies. He spoke about where he could have used it in his just-completed academic year, although he hadn't had that opportunity. It would be most useful, he said, "where I wasn't sure about options, or the appropriate ones or I couldn't decide which one was OK, or where I was stuck." He noted that he had become stuck in his recent drawing class projects. I had a sense here of an emerging opportunity for reflection. It was as if Sal's intuitive process was running dry in some way and he

would have to think about what he was doing. Even so, while he had done some sketching in his following year he was not maintaining a consistent reflective sketchbook practice.

I asked him how he saw the role of the teacher in a general sense. Was the teacher's input important? Sal said again that: "It make sense in some cases. It would help to get ideas, to discuss them . . . in other cases I would get the idea and I'd do it."

I told him that I thought that the DSBJ should be flexible, allowing the participants to get help when they needed it and allowing them to go ahead when they didn't. Sal agreed and we ended our interview.

The DJSB exchange as I had described it in the narrative case study was more or less consistent with Sal's view but, as with the other participants, Sal provided some revisions. Somewhat disquieting was his claim that he hadn't known what he was thinking until I told him. This reminded me of Alice. Like Alida he saw me as opening up the way and then he went there on his own. This reconciled the conflict between his having total freedom and having to work within assigned constraints. Again Alida had something of this view.

Sal was able to tell me some things about himself that I hadn't known, and that made the compositional meanings of his pieces clearer. The story of his parents' separation illuminated his "Personal Cultural History" assignment for me, but it did not seem to make any special sense to Sal. The Lilliputians in his self-portrait with himself depicted as Gulliver could be seen as connected to his childhood storybook images and perhaps his feelings about having to grow up, to be big. At the same time Sal seemed unwilling, or unable, to discuss what other aspects of his life had been symbolized in the piece. On the whole Sal seemed to be unable to connect his work to his life beyond the simple informational level. He seemed, not unlike Gulliver, tied down by a host of petty concerns and unable to control what was happening to him. I had the sense that in the interview, and perhaps through his further studies, he was becoming conscious, but it was

a slow process. One of his early sketches for the self-portrait had himself depicted underwater. I thought this was also a good metaphor for how he seemed to be in the world-rendered somewhat immovable by the pressure of his environment. What that environment was, however, and the lineaments of it remained apparently obscure for Sal and ultimately, in spite of my more informed speculations, to me.

As Sal said, he wasn't big on ideas. He did things. He made art and it was indeed excellent work, but it seemed to flow from a submersion in an area outside of his control and perhaps even his knowledge. Thus he entered into reverie and out of that made work. In this he was a bit like Sharon. For example, the situation with his parents was no doubt stressful and seemed to affect his work. Like Sharon he did not share his personal narrative but he worked out of it intuitively. Later in the interview he spoke of it.

Like the other participants Sal extended and developed the themes of the DJSB through the interview. At one point I directed his attention to that aspect of the interview as it was going forward. I did not ask him directly about his view of text in relationship to image. It seemed clear that he was not as interested in text and in many cases had produced images without it. He was reluctant to engage in the reflection that text implied. He was more interested in action than ideas. In the immediate sense I felt that the DJSB with Sal was a bit of a failure, somewhat in the same way it had been with Sharon and Alice. However, I hoped that in the long run it would plant the seed of self-reflection and begin to make him aware of what his art meant to him. After all, as he said, "You look kinda silly if you don't know what your images mean."

H. Emerging themes and further variations at the UTM/Sheridan site

The follow up interview at the UTM/Sheridan Site generated the following variations on the emergent themes I identified initially at the Concordia site.

1. Each narrative case study was more or less correct according to two participants but they each used the interview to revise the story. The third

participant objected to the central theme that I had identified in my experience of the DJSB exchange and set about seriously to question this. In the process the participant laid claim to her identity both as the participant and as a student in relationship to the teacher. Her claims modified the thematic of the site.

2. "Plot" as a means of comprehending the shape of the DJSB exchange was less evident than at the Concordia site and more so than at the Sheridan site. This was, a function of the existence of cumulative assignments with a four-week envelope. Each plot tended to focus on solving the problem. However, only one participant fulfilled this "plot" in a successful manner. "Plot", as an emergent construct, was questioned by the one participant, Opal, who sought a revised interpretation of the exchange.

3. Anxiety regarding art making was evident at this site, again because there were cumulative projects. However it was there, as at all three sites, because each participant's anxieties about their own life came into play. For two of the participants here some of this anxiety was about the first-year experience. This was similar to the experiences of the Sheridan participants. The third participant revealed that the teacher-student dyad carried with it ongoing historical anxiety. In the end the management of these anxieties by the participants and myself did affect the outcome of the DJSB exchange.

4. Trust remained a key issue in the relative success of the DJSB exchanges Two of the participants trusted the process more or less despite the anxiety of school; the third felt less comfortable with it and did not participate in the dialogue to the same extent.

5. The "school" context continued to exert pressure for compliance. I had the sense here that my "suggestions" were picked up on as acceptable solutions that would result in high grades. This affected the "plot" of the DJSB exchanges.

6. Time and timing continued to play a role in the success of the DJSB exchange at the UTM site. Like Hubert, Alida responded to time as a pressure that enabled her to focus and motivated her to act. I felt I didn't have enough time with Sal though that didn't seem to bother him. Time was still perceived as a pressure or constraint within the school context and also generally.

7. The personal narrative of each participant, including myself, continued to over-determine the DJSB exchange and the issues that arose during it. My lack of knowledge of such narratives, especially with Opal, limited what I could do. Here, that I kept my personal narrative out of the exchange was seen as a plus by the participants. Personal narratives affected the possibility of trust.

8. Problem solving was a large part of the DJSB exchange at the UTM/Sheridan site and the assignments were set up as research, communication and visual composition problems. While I sometimes felt that the participants "solved" their problems by doing what I wanted, they saw me as simply another element in the "problem" to be solved.

9. Text (writing) was understood as a way of confirming ideas about images and as a problem-solving device in itself by one of the participants. One saw it mostly as a way of recording and reporting and the other was only gradually becoming aware of text as a useful reflective tool.

10. The DJSB narrative case studies here as well as at the Concordia site added meaning to the experience of the exchange for two of the participants and myself. The third saw it as a misinterpretation on my part.

11. The interviews here, as well as leading to reconstructions of the original narrative case study, continued the process of the DJSB exchange. In doing so they extended and deepened the understanding of both the participants and myself of what had happened. They also reproduced some of the resistance that had

characterized the exchanges. With one participant they revealed further resistance and the reasons for them.

12. The art making process here through the image marks revealed some sense of reverie. Sometimes that was available in the text. The DJSB process at this site, with the development of a composition focused on a specific issue every four weeks seemed to encourage “doodling” and ruminations within the framework of problem solving.

13. Modeling a language with which to develop creative reflective practice was a part of the course construct from my side. Here, as at Concordia, I had a semester to prepare the participants for what I required. This helped.

14. Gender issues emerged here again in relationship to the personal narratives of the participants. Again I pushed these a bit more here, and although one participant embraced them, she also saw them as a cause of her getting off track in the assignment.

15. Chance occurrences and parallels or the lack of these, both in art making and personal narratives between the teacher and the student participants, played a role in the success or failure of the exchange. I had a background similar to two of the participants. I held this back, and both participants affirmed that this helped them to be freer in their work. However knowing the issues led to interpretation on my part that seemed appropriate by chance.

16. One of the participants saw the DJSB exchange as detrimental to her “self image.”

17. All of the participants expressed some resistance to the role of the teacher in the DJSB exchange.

18. All of the participants were still in school but only one, Alida, was maintaining a sketchbook practice. The other two seemed to have some sort of preparatory practice, perhaps like Marie or Hubert but they were not maintaining a sketchbook as in the DJSB.

19. Here the themes in the art-making were controlled by the assignments. They were emergent, but less so than at the other two sites.

In Chapter Seven, which follows next, I provide an overview of emerging themes at all three sites with some comment on their connection to the successes and failures of the DJSB exchange.

Chapter Seven: Emergent Themes in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Narratives and Interviews

A. Introduction

The clearest outcome of these interviews was the affirmation that the personal narratives of each of the participants had a large effect on the course of the DJSB. Events of which I was unaware had impacted on the choice of project, the choice of image, the composition, and the way in which the whole DJSB exchange was carried out.

B. The narrative case study helped develop trust and also provoked resistance

While each participant had agreed (more or less) that my case study narrative, as applied to the exchange between them and myself was accurate, they each had an important revision or two to make. Whether they did this directly or indirectly it was by telling me stories about themselves and their lives. Opal, however, resisted my interpretation and argued for a revision of the narrative case study.

Overall, however, the narrative case study aided in furthering trust. Most of the participants seemed to appreciate that I had taken the time and had the concern to write up the narrative case study. Their appreciation was apparently linked to the shape that the case study gave to the part of their life represented by the DJSB. They found, in spite of the revisions and the gaps, that the stories that I told about the DJSB exchange were useful to them because they gave meaning to that activity in terms of their art making and their personal narratives. Opal and, to some extent Alice, were exceptions here. As well, in the narrative case study I was more forthcoming about my own life. This seemed to have helped the participants to believe that I took them seriously in a way that went beyond “school” and it put us all on a more equal footing. As a result, they were more forthcoming with me in the interviews.

C. “Plot” as a concept was useful in understanding the movement of the DJSB exchange.

In my emphasis on narrative I have plunged into the problematic world of emplotment (Ricoeur, 1988). This aroused Opal’s suspicion that I knew what was going to happen ahead of time since I was the “teacher” and therefore the author of the story. In fact, and of course, I did not create the story so much as participate in it and record it. Even so “Plot”, as a concept was useful in understanding the movement of the DJSB exchange. Turning points, or crises in the plot when they emerged, seemed to support the DJSB exchange because they helped to give it a shape, a meaning.

Each DJSB exchange took place within limits set by the sites but particularly by the participants including myself. As I entered into the DJSB exchanges I set some bounds but I did not really know how these exchanges would turn out or on what they would turn. Once I had coded the material and constructed narratives based on that material, I did have some sense of how I saw the narrative unfolding and what turned it one way or another. In some cases there did appear to be turning points, almost in the sense of the classical plot, where some disaster seems imminent and the protagonist is able to overcome that and succeed (Surmelian, 1968; Polkinghorne, 1988). Successful navigation of those crises in a creative and reflective manner seemed to depend partly on the “readiness” of the participants (LaBoskey, 1994), a fact determined by their personal narrative histories.

As I constructed the narratives I saw this most clearly with Marie who changed her work in a significant manner after a crisis, a loss of meaning. I missed the turning point with Hubert to some extent during the dialogue, but as I constructed the narrative I noted that it was his turn to self-portraiture and away from direct political statement which led to a shift in his work. I had missed that because I was anxiously trying to contain his energies that I feared would take over a gallery space set aside for an end-of-year art exhibition. In the case of Sharon, I saw little or no conscious development in her work. Rather, there was a rumination on a theme of male-female communication, punctuated by news of

some resolution of her classroom management skills. However, at the end of the exchange she acknowledged my role and avowed some realizations had come to her.

All of this was affected by the culminating project required of the participants at their respective sites, which gave the exchange a shape and an end point as well. As well, all of this was modified in some manner through the personal narrative information that became available through the interviews.

At the Sheridan site there was no final project, but a sense of shape did emerge from the narrative construction that I took on. In Joey R's case it seemed to me that the turning point in the exchange came when I ignored his absence from class and kept on treating his work with seriousness. After that he became more focused on the process. However the turning point for Joey R from his viewpoint seemed to have been at the end of the dialogue when he found himself faced with some kind of choice about what he should do next in his life. As I noted in the narrative it seemed that he had come to a culminating point, but as there was no final work of art required he ended, interrogatively.

Alice, on the other hand, although she seemed as thematically focused as did Joey R, at a certain point, made a drawing of herself on a path. From that point on her work became more focused on representational presentations of issues in her life and she seemed to establish the end of the journey in a final drawing of the gates of heaven. The interview, however, revealed she was as much at a turning point at the end of the DJSB as was Joey R.

Turning points were also apparent to some extent in the narratives I constructed for the UTM participants. The two-project framework meant that they had only about half as much time to develop their ideas and approaches as had the participants at the other two sites. I had the sense that the turning point arose when I approved one of their ideas, which they then executed within the framework of their skills. However there were turning points somewhat outside of the art specifics of the DJSB. For Sal that arose when my life situation interfered with my responses to him. Consequently our dialogue was

attenuated. In Opal's case I decided not to pressure her and to let her follow her own bent in the exchange so to some extent I have to take part of the blame for the didactic quality of the process. Alida, on the other hand, flourished simply through the dialogue and although there were gains made in the exchange she made the most ground simply through the effort she put into the DJSB process. Prior to that she had been somewhat reserved and not very successful in her projects.

The interviews, of course, deepened my understanding of the "plots" of the exchanges. Hubert confirmed that his move to self-portraiture was significant. Marie, with some reservations, saw my intervention as opening a way out of her crisis. Sharon revealed the significant event of her life at the time that framed her DJSB exchange with me, and which, unbeknownst to me had kept her "in a daze" ruminating, meandering.

Both Joey R and Alice opened up a wider frame of reference for their work and let me see how it was connected to personal narrative. I could see more clearly how Joey R had come to a decision point and why Alice seemed somewhat disconnected from her "stories" and images.

Alida confirmed the supporting role that I played in the DJSB but claimed that the decisions made and the turning points were her own. Opal revealed her views of teachers and indicated that for her a turning point had been when she had gone along with my suggestions too much in the second project. Sal had found my enforced neglect of him an opportunity to "do his own thing".

Thus there was some congruence and some divergence on what my participants and I saw as the turning points in the DJSB exchange. Where "turning points" or resolutions of crisis had occurred the DJSB had supported a more successful outcome. As well, what seemed clearest to me after the interviews was that the act of presenting the participants with the constructed narratives had been a turning point in the whole project as it opened up a whole new level of communication that had not existed in the classroom. That

communication could have altered the whole outcome of the art making and of the reflective and creative thinking that had gone into it.

This latter issue suggests, as I discuss later, some problems in the current contexts where we try to teach creative reflective art practice.

D. Anxiety was an ongoing component of the DJSB exchange

Participants found that the process of making images generated anxiety. Some of that was due to the school context where Hubert and Alida, for example, had to produce images as a part of their course/program. However for most of the participants the act of making an image or a composition of images caused them some difficulty. Some of this came out in their hurried sketching process (as with Marie and Joey) or in over-production or under-production; some they expressed verbally, either during the exchange in the text, as did Sharon, or like Opal during the interview.

The participants also seemed to be anxious about reflecting on their work and engaging in a mutual reflection that was supposed to be a part of the DJSB exchange. Some times, as with Alice, Opal, Joey R and Sharon there was a sense that there was an effort to keep me from knowing what they were really up to in their work

I also experienced anxieties about the way on which some of the DJSB exchanges were going and whether or not the participants would be successful

Where anxiety got the better of the participants, or myself as with Hubert or with Opal, the dialogue suffered. Much of my goal in the week-by-week exchange was to reassure participants and to reduce anxiety so that they could function successfully. If I was anxious I was less able to do that.

E. Self-disclosure and a shared world-view supported trust in the DJSB exchange

The issue that seemed to emerge from the follow-up interviews was the decision that the participants each made to trust me or not, during the DJSB. This seemed less of an issue afterwards for most of the participants, who told their stories and filled in the missing links fairly easily, or so it seemed. What was at stake here, at times, was whether or not they wanted to disclose certain facts about themselves. This was most dramatically an issue with Sharon and Alice, but also was the case with Sal, Hubert, Opal, and Joey R. It seemed to be less of a problem for Alida and Marie who had the more successful DJSB exchanges, as I saw it.

At the time of the DJSB exchanges this seemed to be less the case. Sharon, who said that her trust of me had made the dialogue possible, really didn't participate in a dialogue manner. Joey R, who seemed to indicate that I made the dialogue work by being interested in him and his art, kept the exchanges on a somewhat impersonal level. Alida was more forthcoming, but seemed to have separated out her personal sense of values from the exchange as a way of distancing herself from her stories and her work; Alice did this to an even greater extreme. Opal told me very little about herself and Joey R wasn't far behind, though for a different reason, I believe. Only Marie was more or less completely forthcoming around her work and its relationship to her life. Notably it was only with Marie that I told stories about my own life that seemed to "validate" her concerns. I avoided this with other participants and, in the interviews they seemed to feel that my avoidance was a good idea; considering how it all turned out, I am less sure of that from my side.

There was a sense that shared frames of reference, of world views (Geertz, 1973; Gadamer, 1998; Taylor, 1989) and of thinking alike reinforced the process of trust and disclosure. On the simplest level, my telling a story to Marie about a situation in my life that was very much like one in hers, she saw as a "validation" of her feelings and her project. Sharon said she trusted me because we thought alike on spiritual matters; she had

concluded that partly because I couched some of my comments to her in references to astrology and Jungian psychology.

Hubert was less trusting and in the interview revealed that he would have done whatever I asked just to get a good mark on the project. While this seemed connected to his personal narrative history it seemed to be, at least in my mind, a part of the uneasiness that I felt around his project which had started out to be a statement about Québec Separatism. As a “Federalist: from Ontario,” I was unsure of him, and of how “reasonable” he was willing to be. He, on the other hand, was equally unwilling to get into conflict but for pragmatic “school-based” reasons.

Joey R was Christian fundamentalist with very different views than mine at the time of DJSB; yet my own educational background in Catholic parochial schools allowed me to identify the Christian elements in his work. This facilitated our contacts and made me feel sympathetic towards his idealism.

Alice had taught art in elementary schools and that seemed like a point of contact for us during the period of the DJSB exchange. She had also been raised as a Catholic and I understood the religious echoes in her drawings and her comments. However my attempts to discuss “issues of concern to a woman” with her fell on deaf ears.

Alida and Opal were both from northern Ireland and my family comes from the south. I assiduously kept my background out of the exchange, and both confirmed that not to have done so would have muddied the waters. At the same time, the creative tension that bringing such personal narrative history into the art making could have provided was absent. As well, as I found out later, Opal had some previous difficult experiences with her teachers that made it hard for her to see my approach as fully trustworthy.

Sal and I never quite connected though I admired his art. However in his graduating art exhibit three years after the DJSB he presented a large work into which he incorporated

many toy soldiers. This later development of his “big-little” theme made feel that we had made some contact.

Where there were elements of commonalty these seemed to assist in building trust. Where there was some difficulty in finding common ground, or where the conflict was put aside for the sake of apparent comity, there was a slackening of trust. Since trust seems to be what made the dialogue work, where it did, then finding common ground in a conscious manner throughout the DJSB exchange would likely have helped it be more successful and more supportive of a creative reflective process.

F. The “school” context diminished trust and self-disclosure and increased pressure for compliance

On the whole, what all of us shared was our experience in a North American school system. The world-view implied in that seemed to impact on the DJSB exchange, and where commonalities outside of that school world did not arise strongly, both I and my participants tended to fall back into “school rules.”

Hubert’s response to that situation was the most extreme since he was ready to do what he had to do to get a good grade. Sharon, although she said she trusted me, had remained guarded and only Marie had been able to set aside the school context and cross over into a more authentic interaction.

Joey R remained as he said, “a little bit guarded” in the school situation and Alice confessed that all she really thought about during the exchange was “what I wanted” as the teacher who had given her an assignment.

This seemed to be operative at the UTM site as well. Though Alida did want to take command of her projects and make them unique, she also was aware of wanting high grades. Opal’s response to the school situation, conditioned by her childhood experience of teachers, made her unable to really enter into a dialogue. Sal also went his own way,

even though just having someone enter into some kind of contact with him was reassuring. He was quite content that I had less time for him in the final project.

I also was reticent and aware of my responsibilities as a teacher. I rarely entered into the dialogue journal sketchbook exchange with direct references to my personal narrative. That, as I have noted, seemed to be both negative and positive in its effects. All this seems to me to clearly indicate the limits that the “school” world view can impose on any dialogue, and especially one that aims at creative reflective actions.

G. Time was a constraint and timing and readiness were important to success or failure in the DJSB exchange

In all of the DJSB exchanges the success of the process was determined partly by the amount of time available for the participants and myself to complete the work. At each site each participant had equal time as far as the respective assignments went; however, the readiness of the participants to deal with the work varied widely.

Theoretically each was able to function at the level to which they had “passed” or been admitted, but their own readiness to enter into reflective creative dialogue with another, the teacher, in this case, varied. As well, their readiness to deal with a particular issue in their own art making was unevenly distributed.

Some, like Hubert and Alida, were aware of the constraints that the time envelopes of the assignments put on them, and they worked with these as a motivator. Marie was aware that she was ready to deal with the issues on which she focused her image making. Sharon was aware that she was not ready to disclose or discuss the issues she was trying to represent in her art. Joey R and Alice, and even Opal were aware of this lack of readiness as well.

Both Sharon and Alida spoke of this issue of timing and readiness in relationship to students whom they had taught. Clearly this aspect of the situation, timing within the

school context and the constraints it placed on readiness and on development, played a large part in the relative success and failure of the DJSB exchanges.

H. Personal narrative history over-determined the outcome of the DJSB project

That the participants' personal narratives determined, or even over-determined, the outcome of the DJSB seems obvious in retrospect. Hubert's relationship with his father and the early loss of his mother seemed to direct his personal development in certain ways, which appeared in the DJSB, as they probably do in his other endeavors. His desire to work larger than life and to take over the gallery seemed connected to this, as did his rushing ahead to his own conclusions without including me. Indeed he mentioned that he had problems in his teaching similar to those he had in his art making.

Sharon had a current life crisis during the DJSB that she did not wish to disclose. This accounted, in part, for the cryptic and somewhat occult entries through which she sought to avoid the point. At the same time, however, she revealed her concerns indirectly and saw my interventions, which touched on them, as "therapeutic." Apparently she used the DJSB to vent, and, because I was a willing listener, this seemed to help.

Marie was the most open of the participants, but she also made the point that her concerns had been with her for a long time before I came on the scene. This made it hard for her to accept my role in the process even though she saw it there. Certainly her own clarity around her life issues, and the way she resolved them in her art work, made her DJSB exchange more compelling for me than that of other participants.

Joey R had concerns connected to his attempts to reassess his fundamentalist upbringing, which were partly in rebellion against his mother. He also had issues stemming from his participation as a volunteer working in a Christian summer camp for street kids. His attempts to integrate his rebellion around both his belief in a personal commitment to "Jesus" and his desire to be "different" seemed to drive his DJSB images and, to some extent, his reluctance to reveal this during the DJSB process. He remained, as he said, "a

little bit guarded” as he tried to solidify his identity as both a Christian and a rebel. His mode in his own life had been an indirect one and the DJSB reflected some of that.

Alice was complicated. Her life had been fractured somehow by her parents’ divorce that had left her fearful of all relationships. She also seemed desensitized to violence against women, which suggested to me that she had suffered from that in some form. All of this led her to be “mysterious” and to show images but not tell the stories behind them. Her participation conveyed a sense of separation from what had happened to her or what was happening to her. It was clear and well done but somewhat cut -off. She adopted a protective strategy, rather like Joey R. At the same time I believe her participation and that of Joey R reflected the site limitations, the program, the lack of a cumulative project and so on.

Alida, like Marie, was fairly straightforward about her stories, though, through the follow-up interview they did appear more clearly connected to her life as a student rather than to her past. During the DJSB exchange, she did seem to separate out her stories from herself, connecting them to the assignments more than to her own feelings or values. This made her DJSB more intellectual and less feeling-full. This seemed to me to be evident in the proliferation of rhetorical questions that she generated in her exchanges with me. She played with possibilities easily, but it was hard to see why she valued certain ones.

Opal told me little about herself during the DJSB exchange. It became clear through the interview that this was, in part, connected to her views of the “teacher’s role,” and her resentment of that. As well, Opal was discreet, a function of her upbringing, and the openness of her classmates was somewhat appalling to her. She was not about to reveal family affairs just to make art, or so she seemed to be saying. She also had troubles with the interview, as I saw it, insofar as she was trying to deal with her disagreements with me but was unable to do so without rancor. She had felt that she had to go along with my suggestions in the DJSB exchange, which got her into trouble; this seemed to be an aspect of her conflicted views of “teachers.” However, as I have said, during the follow-

up interview, I found her struggle to bring out her own views heartening. It seemed to me that there was a potential for bringing her own life more into her art.

Sal also was less than forthcoming during the DJSB exchange, though that seemed to be because he himself was unaware of how his lived experience was impacting on him. He was only partially aware of the fact that it all seemed to come out in his art. However, as he continued in his degree program, he seemed to be growing in awareness of the connections between his life and his work. He did like DJSB process in which someone was willing to engage him; this was helpful from his point of view. However, his lack of self-awareness limited the impact of the DJSB on his work, which seemed to develop from his own life in a direct manner without my involvement.

I. Problem finding and problem solving were over-determined by personal narrative history

In regard to questions around problem finding and problem solving, most participants were somewhat vague. They did not seem to have perceived their art making in those terms, in spite of the way that I set up the projects. Most had a process description of how they went about solving compositional problems. This was particularly true of the U of T students where, to be fair, I set the overall issues that were to be addressed in the drawings. This was not true at Concordia, but it seems clear to me that at both sites the personal narratives of the participants predetermined how they would approach their art making. In a way their ability to problem-solve was embedded in their personal approaches to life. I did not find a way to get beyond that in the DJSB exchanges. If I had adopted a model from Schon (1983,1985) or Perkins (1986) and applied it rigorously to the process, I might have been able to have more impact in this area. I preferred instead to let the process be an emergent one at these two sites and, as such, one that was strongly affected by personal narrative history and my approach to life. I feel that if I had applied the model-like approaches I would have tended to cover over those personal narrative issues for the participants and myself. This tended to happen at the Sheridan site where I emphasized modernist design vocabulary and concepts. These led the participants away

from their personal concerns to a more impersonal analysis of their work. However even then, personal narrative issues came through. Although they could not really be identified until the time of the follow-up interviews, they were present and had a strong impact on the images and compositions developed by the participants.

J. Text solidified image in the DJSB process

Most of the participants, when I asked about the relationship of text to image in their process, said that they came to their images first. Text was a way of solidifying their ideas or perceptions and, as such, followed on image making. Due to the small group of participants this remains at an anecdotal level but it does seem to be further confirmation of the position taken by Arnheim (1969) and to some extent by Paivio (1991) (though he tends to see the process starting at either end). Only Marie and Alida were aware of the role of text as an assist in working out solutions in their image making. For them text was hermeneutic just as was sketching in their composition development. This was partially true for Hubert but less so for all of the other participants and, apparently not at all for some.

Site constraints did play a role here, however, for Joey R and Alice.

K. The interview continued the DJSB exchange process but in a new context

The process begun in the DJSB exchanges went on in the interviews but generally in a more open manner. The fact that the interview was outside of school, and that I was not going to be grading the participants, seemed to have given them more freedom to be themselves. In most cases the existence of the narrative case study provided a basis for greater trust.

The kind of comments and the kind of reassurance that I had provided during the DJSB exchange continued in the interview. I found myself commenting on themes in Sal's work, for example, and discussing with Joey R and Sharon how they could use the DJSB

in their work. I opened up new aspects of both the personal narratives of the participants and myself that could lead to new image making.

There was a sense with Alice and Opal that I was really just beginning the actual DJSB exchange in a way that could lead to creative image making based on a reflective creative process. It was clear that the interview continued what the DJSB had begun.

L. Art making made use of reverie mostly through the sketching process

From the viewpoint of creativity theorists (Chapter Three), reverie is an important facet of the creative process. In the DJSB exchange signs of reverie came primarily from the sketching procedures in which the participants engaged.

Sharon used a kind of poetic rumination which suggested reverie at the text level. This was also somewhat apparent in the extended notes that Alida made beside her sketches. Alice referred directly to a dream as a source for one of her sketches but her text remained linear. Marie provided an example of text that was reverie-like but she commented on it as she did on her sketches. Generally her DJSB text was problem-oriented and rational. The notes in Sal's sketchbook had a reverie-like discontinuity somewhat like Alida's, but he provided only sparse notes. Text for Joey R and Alice remained primarily descriptive or narrative.

M. Modeling a language of self-reflection was a primary activity of the teacher

It was clear from both the narrative case studies and the interviews that only two of the participants were able to enter into a mutual creative and reflective exchange and one of these only partially. Much of my work as an interlocutor in the DJSB exchanges was to model a lexicon and a rhetoric for such an exchange.

At the Concordia site this was my primary goal with Sharon who did not respond in a normal conversational manner, but wrote a kind of poetic discourse parallel to her

sketches. With Hubert I also had this as a task although there was a greater sense of exchange with him. With Marie I could engage and model the language in the exchange rather than use it as a rehearsal for such an exchange.

This rehearsal quality dominated at the Sheridan site for reasons partly determined by the constraints at that site. It was that way as well at the UTM/Sheridan site though with Alida there was a somewhat more direct exchange. At the latter two sites I supported the DJSB exchange with a textbook on modernist design theory.

N. Gender issues emerged but did not take center stage in the DJSB exchange

At each site there were emergent gender issues but they did not come forward in a reflective manner into the work of the participants though I supported that opportunity. Sharon spoke of “the pain of being a woman” but never developed that theme during the DJSB exchange in a conscious reflective manner. Hubert was aware of his role as the only male in a class of women but he said they saw him as a “sister.”

Joey R’s images were sometimes stereotypically male and that issue was a sub text in his “rebellion” within his religious context. Alice was more directly concerned with “issues of concern to a woman” as I put it, but she refused to accept the possibility that these, as broader concerns, were central to her image making process preferring to focus paradoxically on herself.

At the UTM/Sheridan site the issues were constrained by the assignments but, in Opal’s case, I encouraged her to follow up these gender issues in her self-portrait project. She did so, but felt they got her off track. However she remained sympathetic to gender issues at the time of the interview.

While I had not made such themes a central part of my research they did emerge and significantly so in some cases.

O. Chance occurrences played an important role in the success or failure of the DJSB

Chance seemed to play an important role in the DJSB exchanges. This was particularly so in the exchange with Marie where a chance parallel in our personal narratives seemed to open up the creative possibilities with which she had been struggling. In the DJSB exchange with Joey R he reached a crisis point that he expressed in “Jump,” an image that matched one I had just used in a work I was preparing for a course at OISE as part of my doctoral work. The congruence of images was unexpected and allowed me to comment on Joey R’s image in a contextual manner that, from the interview afterwards, seems to have been helpful.

Other chance parallels (or rather oppositions) occurred though it was unclear to me how to use them and they may have limited the DJSB exchange. Both Alida and Opal came from northern Ireland while I came from southern Ireland. I kept this out of the DJSB exchange but it might have opened up more possibilities for mutual creative reflection. Certainly my origin in Ontario was at variance with Hubert’s Québécois upbringing. This did limit my understanding of what he was up to in his work.

P. The DJSB had “therapeutic” impact on some participants

Sharon and Joey R both said that the DJSB exchange was therapeutic. Marie noted that it allowed her to heal some wound from her past regarding an elderly friend. Alida, Joey R and Sal seemed to feel that the DJSB exchange had helped them deal with issues arising out of their “first year” in a post secondary institution. Alice seemed untouched by the exchange at the time though she brought forth evidence of upsetting material. Later in the interview she linked art making to her “soul search” and said that she thought that art was important for the way it could help one to resolve issues. Hubert used the DJSB exchange to move from politics to a personal statement but I missed much of that process. Hubert saw his resolutions more viscerally in the birth of his son. Opal did not appear to find much that was helpful in the DJSB exchange and in fact felt it as an attack on her self-

image. It was contra-therapeutic for her, or so she thought. I thought that it had raised an issue around her whole sense of education and had allowed her to question that, perhaps the first time. If so, there was some value in the process.

While my goals were not therapeutic, I thought that the experience of the DJSB had made the participants more conscious of their processes and their issues. The extent of that only became clear after school and as a result of the interview. Insofar as the DJSB exchange had helped the participants to understand the shape or pattern that their life had followed in some sense I felt that it had therapeutic overtones. I took no specific theoretical or practical position on this issue.

Q. All of the participants expressed resistance to what I perceived as the significance of the teacher's role in the DJSB exchange.

The follow-up interviews suggested that my involvement, from the participants' point of view, was important, but less important than I tended to believe. At the same time, I felt that they were reluctant to accept the fact that the interventions that I made had an impact and that their work had changed because of my commentary. Even Marie was somewhat closed to this. At the same time, from Opal's vantage point, I had too much influence, and in a way she blamed me for her projects not working out as well as they might have. Some participants agreed with my comments, and acknowledged the importance of the DJSB, but Hubert said later that he did so in order to protect his success in the course.

Since I did not have all the facts (the related personal narrative material) I must also say that I seemed to be less significant than I might have wished in the working out of the DJSB process. I created the frame of reference through the DJSB exchange and in that context I did provide ongoing directions and encouragement to the participants. This seemed to be helpful, at least within the context of the course. All of the participants, except for Opal, expressed appreciation and even delight at the narrative case study. This seemed to be because of the way it structured the DJSB experience for them and, I

believe, because it carried forward a valorization of their actions as student artists and as participants in the DJSB.

R. The participant involvement in a regular sketchbook practice was a function of their school context not personal commitment

The Concordia participants, at the time of the interview, were not engaged in an ongoing sketchbook practice. Where they used sketching it was only in relationship to discreet art works, and not as a part of idea development. The Sheridan participants had dropped it altogether and two of the UTM participants, although still in school, only used sketching intermittently. Alida was the only one out of the entire DJSB project to maintain the practice and see it as important to her successful art making. Most saw it as valuable and lamented their lack of attention to it as a practice.

S. Art making themes were controlled in part by the site constraints

Art making themes were emergent at the Concordia site, where the projects were defined by the participants in consultation with me. At the Sheridan site there was no culminating project and the theme of a “life path” emerged on its own. At the UTM/Sheridan site there were specific assignments by which the art making themes were largely driven.

I turn next to Chapter Eight and a discussion of how I tried to assess the participants as to their relative success or failure in creative and reflective action in their practice of the DJSB.

Chapter Eight: Assessing Participant Creativity and Reflective Thinking in the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook Project

A. Introduction

In each of the DJSB exchanges a variety of themes emerged around the mutual creative and reflective process in which the participants and I were engaged. Most important among these, with regard to the initial purpose of this study, were those related to how the DJSB supported that mutual creative reflective action. In order to clarify the relative successes and failures of the DJSB I turn now to how that played itself out.

The review of the DJSB exchanges between myself and the participants in the study, is framed by characteristics of the creative and reflective person delineated by such diverse authorities as Dewey (1934), Ehrenzweig (1970), Beittel (1972), Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), La Boskey (1994), Perkins (1981, 1986), Schon (1982, 1985), Zurhmuehlen (1990) as I have previously discussed. Those characteristics derived from the model I outlined in Chapter Three include:

- a. The ability to be attentive to disruptions in one's personal life either internally or externally.
- b. The ability to frame those disruptions as problems.
- c. The ability to work on solving those problems through two kinds of strategies.
 - i) Reverie: a process that is largely unconscious and invokes pre-logical formulations that underlie symbol formation e.g. association, condensation, displacement (Arnheim (1962), Ehrenzweig (1970), Rose (1980). Reverie is accompanied by anxiety and it is important that the anxiety not be too strong or it will overwhelm the secondary process.
 - ii) Reflection: a process of conscious reflective thinking about the problem at hand which makes use of the products of reverie (Schon, 1982, 1985; Perkins,

1986; Von Wright, 1992). It involves extended recursive thinking that places the problem in new contexts and which allows the practitioner of reflection to seek solutions through development of the potentials revealed through reverie. Too much anxiety can affect and even overcome this process.

In the case of visual art these processes must focus on image and/or object making and the compositional and constructive issues entailed in those processes. The artist's life problems are dealt with, at least in part, through the proxy process of image making (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). Accordingly, both processes of reverie and reflection will be revealed through sketching of details and compositional ideas, and through written or spoken comments on the process. Reverie's products are often best located in the sketching process (Fish and Scrivener, 1990) or indicated through expressions of anxiety related to sketching, on the part of the art-maker (Ehrenzweig, 1970; Rose, 1980). Reflective processes can be seen in the text commentaries but also in the inter-relationships between sketches of details and of compositional ideas (Arnheim, 1962, 1969, 1974).

Mutual reflections and creative thinking entail a dialogue between an interlocutor, often seen as an "expert practitioner" and an artist who is engaged in making artwork (Beittel, 1972; Schon, 1985). Such dialogues work primarily on the reflective level and draw upon the products of the art maker's reveries. However, in some cases, reverie-like products (as in memory or dream) may play a role from the side of the interlocutor. Minimally both parties must acknowledge the input by the other. Maximally one may credit the other with key insights, ideas, even images, that lead to the resolution of the original problem or a useful recasting of it that opens up to a unique visual solution.

I will now briefly summarize how these processes worked for the practitioners in this project (the art-makers) and myself as the interlocutor. As I do so, I will point to the successes and failures of the participants and of myself as their "expert guide."

B. Creativity, reflectivity and reverie in the DJSB exchanges: the view from the narrative case studies

1. The Concordia site

a. Hubert

At the Concordia site Hubert seemed aware of his personal narrative, and of disruptions, which could be expressed in images. His detail and his installation sketches reflected his apparent ability to connect his personal situation to his art making. As well, he had a good connection between his detail sketches and his installation sketches. Moreover, he revealed, through his comments, a relatively high level of anxiety, a sign of reverie like processes. His extensive use of symbolic imagery seemed to confirm this. Even so there was relatively little sense of sketch-like explorations of form, for he had very few unclear marks in his sketches.

He seemed to be more “in control” than his relatively high level of anxiety would have suggested. Perhaps it would be fair to say that he aimed for control as a result of that anxiety.

His reflective process was relatively strong both through his text comments and through his image production. He used transformative strategies in his image making more often than the participants overall did, and he both sustained and re-conceptualized his ideas in his commentaries over the course of the DJSB exchange. On the whole his reflective activities seemed strong, but his reverie like processes seemed constrained in his relative reluctance to “mess about” in his sketching.

In fairness I should note that his approach to form was more controlled than for some of the other participants, partly because he was concerned with the issue of construction of his installation with attendant architecture-like concerns. However his “choice” of

approach was designed to emphasize control. I was, in turn, supportive of Hubert and engaged in a mutual reflection on his image making process and idea development.

This he acknowledged. I, however, also had some anxiety myself about the direction of his work. This could be seen in my greater than usual use of directive statements. While these were meant to help Hubert overcome some of his own anxious feelings about where he was going, they did tend toward didactic comments on his approach and, in this sense, were somewhat less supportive, somewhat less mutual than I would have liked. I wanted to see Hubert arrive at a satisfactory conclusion to his project and I felt some of the time constraints from which he also suffered. This problem arose throughout the DJSB exchange but in Hubert's case seemed somewhat more acute. It seemed to me that he was taking on too much in his project and I continually had to set boundaries so that he would finish in time.

b. Sharon

Sharon was similar to Hubert; she seemed aware of the disruptive processes in her life, but she was unable to articulate them clearly and to relate them consciously to her art making, at least during the course of the DJSB. Nor was she clearly able to identify problems in a coherent manner throughout the exchange either in her life or her art making.

In her images she revealed a strong capacity for reverie. Her images were unclear and exploratory at times and they had a highly symbolic and poetic quality. As well, her text expressed a strong sense of anxiety and questioning that seem to be a mark of preconscious cognitive processing. However, she seemed to be weak in reflective processing in both her text and image making.

She had plenty of new ideas but she seemed to have less capacity for sustaining them, for framing and re-framing them and so on. She showed little in the way of compositional sketching, though she was big on detail sketches. She did produce a finished composition

at the end of the DJSB process, which was apparently thematically related to her symbolic sketches, but she seemed unable to make connections between the two.

Complicating matters was the fact that she did not acknowledge my comments until after the DJSB was completed. I proceeded on faith that she was aware of my comments, since she continued to produce entries each week. As I did so, I found myself modeling for her how I expected her to respond. I noted problems; I tried to work them through over a series of moves, referring often to her images; I made a few autobiographical references in my comments as if to prime the pump. It was not until the end of the process that she acknowledged my comments and said that she saw the DJSB as a kind of mini-psychoanalysis. This was true in some sense, for I interpreted her symbolic images and her texts in a way that she was unable or unwilling to do. However, I had no psychotherapeutic intent, but rather I was trying to get her to respond reflectively, and to tell me what she thought she was doing in her art making.

On the whole, I reflected on her texts and images and she did not. She simply produced them. While she was strong on reverie she seemed unable to surface and redirect her process.

c. Marie

Marie seemed to encompass the characteristics of the creative reflective artist in both her texts and in her images submitted throughout the course of DJSB. She was aware of the disruptions in her own life and she was able to link them to problems in visual and compositional frames of reference. She did this through both reverie and reflection.

Her images had a higher than usual exploratory quality and were strongly symbolic even as they were realistic. She was able to connect detail sketches to compositional sketches and she was able to develop her themes in a parallel way through her texts at a greater than usual reflective level for the study. Her texts also revealed a high level of anxiety both in relation to her work and her life, a sign of some preconscious processing.

Because she was so clearly able to link reverie and reflection, personal narrative and image development, detail sketches and compositional sketches, my role was somewhat easier. I supported her reverie by trying to offset her anxiety; I supported the reflective development of her ideas and images by engaging in her idea development from my side, and by expressing my sincere appreciation and liking of her work.

I did make use of suggestions and directions at about the same level as I had for Hubert. Again this was aimed at alleviating Marie's anxiety, but it may have compromised some of the mutuality of the exchange.

In my exchange with Marie I also found myself drawn to using reverie. Through a reverie-like response to one of Marie's images I was reminded of something from my own life and, as a result, I told her the only personal story I was to produce from my side of the dialogue throughout the entire study. The by-chance parallelism in my life and Marie's, which I evoked by telling this story, apparently impelled the direction of Marie's project. My own personal narrative surfaced here as an explicit element in the process of Marie's art making. This was unique in the study.

2. The Sheridan site

a. Joey R

For Joey R and Alice at the Sheridan site, the conditions of the exchange were different from those at Concordia and UTM/Sheridan. The absence of a culminating project seemed to reduce the exchange to one in which I modeled a way for Joey R and Alice to write about their respective image making. Even so, aspects of a dialogue exchange were evident even as were aspects of the creative reflective process in the entries of the participants.

While Joey R did not refer directly to his own personal narrative or provide indications of disruptions in his life that connected to his image making, he did refer, in his work, to social issues and to issues relevant to his peer group. These were often disruptive issues, and they underlay the image making process in which Joey R was engaged.

Joey R's images were often exploratory and showed clear signs of the search for form that could be seen in Marie's sketches. They were also strongly symbolic. All this suggests that Joey R engaged in creative reverie and, in fact, did this more frequently than participants at the other sites.

His texts and images were connected and revealed a reflective process within each entry. He repeated and developed his images over the exchange, and his comments showed him to be aware of his repetition of such images from sketch to sketch. Such a progressive approach I had expected at other sites, but not so much from the Sheridan site. While Joey R's framing and re-framing statements were somewhat less frequent than for other participants, he repeated his ideas as often, and he used transformative strategies with his images more often than had other participants.

My response to Joey R focused on linking text and image and on explaining compositional issues. Part of this was modeling, part of it response to what Joey R was doing in his work. As well, I supported Joey R, though at a slightly lower rate than I did for the participants overall. Joey R did not express appreciation of my comments directly through his texts, but he did so in the periodic interviews.

I was struck by the emergent nature of the DJSB exchange with Joey R as he developed his images and extended his comments. By the end of the exchange Joey R could have moved onto a cumulative project just as did the participants elsewhere. As well, by the end of the exchange Joey R was beginning to identify his own narrative in his work. Overall in the DJSB exchange he appeared to be creative and reflective in his work, though it fell short of the final development that occurred at the other sites.

b. Alice

Alice had a strong sense of her personal narrative and she addressed problems in her life through her image making. Of some of these she seemed clear and conscious; while of others she seemed less aware. However, although she was able to identify problems in her life and to make these the subject of her weekly sketches, she expressed very little anxiety about either the subject matter or the art making processes and issues. Like Joey R, she focused strongly on image and compositional issues. At the same time her framing and development statements were more frequent than those of the participants overall, so there was a strong sense of reflective activity in her texts. In spite of a tendency to repeat key words or thematic tags in her texts, there was a strong sense of continuity in Alice's images. She presented images and used transformative strategies at a higher than usual rate.

Her sense of reverie seemed strong, though it too was indicated almost totally by her image work. She had a strong symbolic trend in her images and frequently used unclear marks. Again, she seemed detached from the anxiety that accompanied such processes in other participants. Alice did express appreciation for my comments.

As elsewhere, I supported her, I explained ideas, and I modeled text commentary on image-making processes. As with Joey R, I focused mostly on image and compositional issues. I framed ideas, referred to her work and repeated ideas as often as I did overall. I had fewer suggestions and directions, but then Alice seemed to have fewer anxieties

I was somewhat confused by her seeming objectivity, but I did not pursue affect. I noted that she revealed emergent themes in her texts and images just as had Joey R. Like Joey R, it seemed to me that Alice could have gone onto a cumulative artwork that would have developed and focused her ongoing concerns.

3. The UTM/Sheridan site

a. Alida

Like Marie, at the Concordia site, Alida, at the UTM/Sheridan site, seemed to integrate the varied aspects of creative and reflective thinking into her image making and into her related text comments. She was able to locate image making problems in the disruption of her own personal narrative, but she did not express as much in the way of her values, wishes or beliefs as did Sharon or Marie. It was as if, like Alice, she was somewhat distanced from her own situation.

She focused more than usual on image and compositional issues, and in her idea development and her conceptualization she had very high code assignments. In her reflective practice she had a different approach than most participants. She asked questions of herself in a soliloquy-like fashion, mostly about her work. Sharon, at the Concordia site, had also used such questions but they had focused exclusively on her life issues. Sharon had remained “unaware” of my comments while Alida did express appreciation of my role during the exchange.

She revealed a strong sense of reverie in the process. As well as expressing characteristic anxiety she had a strong symbolic aspect to her images and she engaged in exploration of form in her images. At the same time, she was reflective in her image making. She used both detail and compositional sketching and she made extensive use of transformational image strategies.

In my comments I also focused strongly on image and compositional issues, noting problems and linking my comments to her images through direct referrals. I tried to alleviate some of her anxiety with suggestions and a higher than usual expression of liking and appreciation for her work. My role, as with Marie, seemed focused on: a) support of Alida through alleviating her anxiety; b) helping her to remain focused on her ideas through developmental and re-conceptualizing commentary.

b. Opal

Opal differed from most other participants in her approach to the DJSB. In spite of the site constraints, she was not interested in presenting information about her personal narrative. Nor was she interested in finding problems in the areas of visual or compositional concern and solving them through reflective processing.

Even so, she had a higher than usual frequency of explanation and a high rate of referral to her own work and to that of other artists. She was interested in conveying the information that she had gathered through her research. If her concern for visual and compositional issues was low, she did repeat her ideas and frame them at usual or higher than usual frequencies. Overall, she seemed to avoid reverie-like exploratory processes in her sketches. However, her sketches were poetic and did show some lack of clarity characteristic of formal exploration. She presented her visual researches through sketches rather than through photocopying. Her sketches tended to be focused on details and she did a minimum of compositional sketching, so there was not much sense of reflective process in her images. Rather, as with her text, there was a strong sense of presenting information.

As a result of all of this I felt, from my point of view, that the DJSB exchange did not reveal Opal's creative processes. Indeed the exchange seemed stymied by Opal's reluctance to bring forward evidence of her processes, or a sense of what was important to her in her situation regarding her art making. This differed from Sharon who had a lot to say about herself but little to say about her images. Opal had a lot to say about her images but it was information of an historical or art-historical nature.

As a result, my responses to Opal were somewhat limited. As with the other participants I let her set the terms of the exchange. However, as with Joey R or Alice, I found myself modeling a reflective process to some extent, linking my explicative to descriptions of her work. I shifted my comments here more towards directions and suggestions. Here the idea was not so much to offset an apparent anxiety entailed in creative work but to move

Opal in the direction I thought that she should go. In short, I became didactic and the dialogue as such failed. In this situation I had a higher than usual level of anxiety. Even so, I did use support statements and I did express appreciation and liking for Opal's work.

In the end, from my perspective, Opal seemed either blocked, or unwilling to reveal her creative and reflective process and I felt unsure of how to reach her. The DJSB exchange became didactic rather than creative and reflective.

c. Sal

Sal produced the least amount of text and images across all the sites. However, he also came across as a creative and reflective participant. His proportion of personal narrative comments was high, as was his ability to focus on problems that linked his narrative and his image making process. He focused strongly on image and compositional issues and showed himself able to follow a reflective course in problem solving around them. Frequently he repeated key ideas and introduced new ideas.

As well he used reverie-like processes as indicated by a high frequency of anxiety comments and by the many unclear marks in his sketches. He extended his reflective process apparent in his texts through his image making. He repeated images and his relative use of compositional sketches to detail sketches was high. He used many transformative strategies as well.

Sal expressed appreciation of my responses to his work. However, because Sal was so "on the mark," my focus on image and compositional issues was somewhat less than usual. At the same time, as with other participants, he expressed high levels of anxiety and so my expressions of suggestion and direction were high. I also expressed support for Sal's work and my liking for it at a very high level. All of this was meant to reassure him that he was on the right track. My directions and suggestions, as with other participants, risked reducing the mutual effect of the dialogue but this seemed like a minor problem here.

C. An Assessment of the participants' creative and reflective activity in the DJSB based on the narrative case studies

1. Initial assessments of patterns

In my initial assessment of the “Concordia Pilot” participants, even before I had begun the work at the other sites, I had established a typology of participants and schemata of my response. I introduced these in Chapter Three and, for convenience sake, I list them again below.

a. Patterns of student response

- i) Self-reflective response integrating inner feelings and technical resolution of art problem.
- ii) Self-reflective response focused on solving technical problems without much reference to inner states.
- iii) Poetic response paralleling image production in text but not too much on solving art problems.
- iv) Ruminating response, chewing over a fixed idea without much indication of finding or solving new art problems.
- v) Ignoring response not discussing inner issues, making of own art and generally not acknowledging pedagogical interventions.

b. Patterns in My responses as a teacher.

My own responses as a teacher I linked to the student categories:

- i) Supportive, explicative to Student response: 1. a. i.
- ii) Explicative, technically to student response: 1. a. ii.
- iii) Explicative, interpretive, descriptive to student response: 1. a. iii.

- iv) Limiting, challenging to student response: 1. a. iv.
- v) Redirecting to own work. 1. a. v.

Turning to the situation as it emerged from my coding process and analysis I saw continuities. My categories remained much the same but my view had become more complex and deeper. Moreover, I saw some categories as applicable to more than one participant. In what follows I try to summarize how that was so.

2. Revisions in my understanding of the initial patterns of response/engagement

a. The student participant patterns

The creative and reflective participant (1.a. i.) seems to have been best exemplified, in the DJSB exchange, by Marie. Sal and Alida were strong in those respects as well. However, Alida seemed somewhat distanced personally from her own narrative and approached the task of developing art far more as an exercise than did Marie. Sal's narrative showed a creative reflective practice, but he had a much smaller number of sentences and texts than any other participant, so there is some doubt about how deeply his creative and reflective processes ran. All three seemed to be able to participate in a dialogue with me.

The other participants seemed to evince other problems, to a greater or lesser extent, that interfered with either their creative and reflective processes or with the exchange with me.

Hubert seemed overly concerned with control in his approach to a solution (1.a.ii). This was also true with Opal, though in a somewhat different way. Opal seemed to have little awareness of how to develop a composition through reflection and she seemed reluctant to incorporate her personal narrative into her work in a conscious manner. Her approach was "technical", but somewhat like (category 1.a.v.) students at Concordia, she was not cognizant of inner issues.

Sharon seemed, at least for the duration of the exchange, to be in her own poetic world (1. a. iii.). She did not acknowledge my comments. She concentrated on her own stories. Her sketches, while interesting and (as I saw it) symbolically related to her final work, did not seem, from her vantage point to be so related. Thus, much of her sketching was apparently disconnected from a reflective development of her final composition. Sharon was, it seems, responsive to my interventions. Although she did not say so directly until the DJSB exchange was completed she had considered them so significant that they were “therapeutic.” I supported her in her poetic and ruminative approach (1. a. iv.) even though I was in the dark on her state of mind.

Joey R and Alice were clearly in a different kind of exchange with me because there was no culminating project at their site. However, it is worth noting that Joey R did not explicitly bring his personal narrative into the exchange until the very end. For the most part, he focused on socially relevant issues, somewhat in the same way as had Opal. Alice did bring in her personal narrative and formed her images in relationship to it. However, she expressed no anxiety about the process nor about what were sometimes disconcerting images. She seemed separated in her feelings from these issues and images though they came from her life. In this way they both seemed to be a combination of categories (1. a. i. and 1. a. ii.) with something of a greater emphasis on the latter. They both also presented a ruminative aspect (1. a. iv.) going over certain themes and even images as they worked their way through the DJSB exchange.

To come back to Opal, she was able to convey information well in her images but she was not able, it seemed to me, to transform that information. This was somewhat like the ruminating response of category (1. a. iv.). She tended to produce aggregated compositions rather than ones that had to be transformatively constructed.

The participants across the three sites seemed to embody the characteristics that I had originally laid out in the “Concordia Pilot” with the original group that had included Hubert, Sharon and Marie but in different proportions or with different emphases. It seemed that I had established sub-categories of behavior, within the original five, that

were characteristic of ranges of creative reflective art making. I didn't feel that I needed to revise my participant response patterns at this point although I thought that I had to be attentive to degrees of emphasis, or mixed types.

The proportions of these behaviors in each case reflected the success or failure of the participants in the creative and reflective process or with the dialogue. Sometimes, of course, the problem lay with me as the interlocutor.

b. Revisions in my understanding of my patterns

Generally I aimed at supporting the efforts of the participants by entering into their reflective processes (1. b. i.). Also, where it seemed appropriate, I modeled for them what I thought was good reflective thinking about visual and compositional issues. I mirrored their process to some extent and I tried to extend it where I believed it was blocked or insufficient. Some of these approaches I had not clearly identified in my original list, though they seemed like subsets of most of the original categories.

I also spent time trying to help the participants overcome the anxiety of the creative reverie into which they fell from time to time, and the anxiety of the classroom situation. I did this by expressing appreciation and liking for their work, by expressing direct support and by giving suggestions and, at times, directions (1. b. ii.). This latter strategy was a bit dodgy, since it could reduce the mutuality of the dialogue and move towards traditional didacticism. Most of the original patterns of response I identified, except the first one, could fall into this. With one participant, Opal, this became a real problem for me and I tended to use strategies (1. b. iv.) and (1. b.v.). This shift towards the bottom of the list tended to occur when I felt that the situation was breaking down, and I became anxious about the outcome. This did not always help and I tried to de-emphasize such shifts by sticking to supportive statements that either entered into the reflective creativity of the participant or modeled how to be creative and reflective. The original categories of response that I had laid out in the Concordia Pilot did not pay enough attention to the tone of the interchange, whether I felt secure or whether I had become anxious myself.

I felt in a way that I had two sets of responses that rhetorically were much the same but that tonally were different. I did attempt to let the participants set the pace and I tried to follow them rather than lead them. I could see however, from the narrative case studies as they developed, that I had used a wider range of responses than I had originally noted in the pilot, and, that like the participants, I had my own problems with anxiety.

At this stage I felt that I should add the phrases “by mirroring” and “modeling” to categories (1. b. i.; ii.; iii.) when applicable. I also thought that I should specify supportive actions by the addition of the phrases “by expressing appreciation” and “by expressing liking for the work” to category (1. b. i.). In categories (1. b. iv.) and (1. b. v.) I thought that I should add the phrase “anxious response” where appropriate. This seemed to make the patterns more accurate, but also somewhat less easy to use. Rather than try to establish a final set of categories, I decided to await the outcome of the interviews.

I also noted that, while I was not always able to respond positively due to my own anxieties, my responses across the sites to the participants were generally similar. I felt that only with Hubert and Opal had my own anxieties gained the upper hand. In light of this, I was concerned to notice that I had succeeded with only one participant in a complete way, and well with only two others. All of the remaining participants seemed to evince some problems with the creative and reflective process involved in art making that I had been unable to help them overcome. While they had all created art works, sometimes on a relatively high level, they did not seem to understand why or how they had done so. I also felt, sometimes anxiously, that perhaps they were unwilling to convey their understandings to me for some reason.

3. Rankings of the participants and myself on creative reflective success derived from the narrative case studies and supporting memos

a. Introduction

To sum up these conclusions derived from the narrative case studies, even though I felt there was still something problematic in them, I constructed the following Tables One

and Table Two, ranking the participants and myself on creative reflective activity. Table One shows Marie ranked first, Alida and Sal tied for second, Alice and Joey R tied for third, Sharon fourth, Hubert fifth and Opal last. This represented a schematic of how I thought and felt about the capacity of the participants to engage in creative reflective activity as established in the narrative case studies.

b. A Ranking of the participant's in creative and reflective Activity in the DJSB

Table One: A Ranking of the participant's in creative and reflective Activity in the DJSB

Participant	Rank
Marie	1
Alida	2
Sal	2
Alice	3
Joey R	3
Sharon	4
Hubert	5
Opal	6

Table Two was my effort to do the same thing with my sense of how well I had participated in the creative and reflective activity of the participants through the DJSB exchange. It shows some variation from the Table One. I believe that I did better with Sharon and Alice than I had with Sal though I had ranked Sal higher on his own creative reflective activity. I saw my responsiveness to Hubert, Joey R and Opal at about the same level although I had ranked them differentially on their own creative reflective activity in the DJSB exchange.

c. Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the Participants

Table Two: Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the Participants

Participant	Rank
Marie	1
Alida	2
Sharon	2
Alice	3
Sal	4
Hubert	5
Joey R	5
Opal	5

D. Reconsidering my categorizations and rankings following the interviews

1. Introduction

After I had interviewed each participant I had a somewhat different view of what had happened. This led me to re-assess the success and failure of each participant in the DJSB exchange.

2. Creative reflective practice in art making

Creative reflective practice art making in the DJSB exchange draws upon rational and irrational elements in the person making the art and in the situation in which they make it. The ability to move from reverie-like states or periods of analogical or metaphoric

thinking to states of rational problem definition and planning for solutions, seems to be conditioned partly by the role that anxiety plays in the process. Where anxiety is high it can overwhelm the situation even to the point where the artist may abandon the task of making art (Erhrenzweig, 1970; Rose, 1980). In the DJSB exchange high levels of anxiety seemed to create either crisis situations or withdrawals. Where the crisis became evident, where a turning point was clear, it seemed possible for me as the teacher to alleviate some of the anxiety through supporting the participant either through encouragement or through helping with problem definition and solution development. For that to work, however, there had to be trust between the participants and myself. That was, on the whole, hard to achieve in the DJSB exchanges, even where commonalities in world view, outside of the assumed school context, seemed evident.

Why this was so became clearer through the interviews. These interviews gave the participants and myself opportunities to reveal aspects of personal narrative histories that determined their response to the anxiety they felt both in school and in their lives. Once I understood how those anxieties had affected the DJSB exchange, I re-assessed both my categorization of the participants and, in terms of interactions, of the relative success or failure of the participants and myself in the DJSB exchanges.

3. Participant creative reflective activity in the light of the interviews

a. Hubert

Hubert had appeared to me to be somewhat rigid in his conceptions and to be resistant to my suggestions. At the same time I had realized, through the writing of the narrative of the DJSB exchange with him, that I had missed a shift that had taken place in his work. I ascribed that to my own anxiety about Hubert's large ideas and about his possible position on Québec separatism. When I interviewed Hubert it became clear that he had anxieties about getting good grades and that he was far more ready to retreat than I thought.

At the same time it seemed to me that Hubert's desire to over-achieve was linked to the loss of his mother at an early age and perhaps to expectations that his father had of him. Hubert had found himself in a conflicted situation. He wanted to do well so he had to please me, and I kept recommending simple solutions to his problems in expressing his ideas/feelings. He had a grandiose agenda to fulfill if he wanted familial approval and, I thought, because he was attempting to deal with his early loss through such over-achievement.

Once I saw all of this I could understand why he seemed to be somewhat stymied. His move to a self-portraiture orientation in his project seemed to me, in retrospect, to be a good move in terms of resolving some of his issues. He had done better than I had thought in my initial consideration of him. However it remained true that our exchange, for reasons on both sides, had been less clearly helpful than in some other situations. In a way we had both run afoul of our own differing desires for control.

b. Sharon

Sharon's interview was revelatory. It had a quality similar to our DJSB exchange, a sense of some missing link, until she had told me that during the DJSB period that she had an abortion and had not wanted to speak of that directly. I saw immediately that her feelings around that incident and her inability to bring either the event or her feelings forward had prevented some process from happening. She had operated, as she said, "in a daze," and although she was intuitively creative, she could not bring her concerns to the surface enough to make them a conscious part of the DJSB exchange.

I could appreciate her position and see that the art she made fit her situation, but she was unable to make her process conscious in a reflective manner even though she said that she had trusted me. I had supported her throughout the DSJB exchange but I had little sense that I was getting through. In the end, because of this communication gap I ranked her rank low for success in a creative reflective process within the DJSB exchange

c. Marie

I viewed Marie as first among the participants in creative reflective practice. I did not change this following the interview. Some things stood out however; one was that Marie's trust of me arose out of a coincidental parallel in our lives that validated her experience and so allowed her to share with me the true feelings behind her impulse to art making. This enabled me to support her and to help her find an appropriate outcome. While Marie admitted this to be true she had a hard time with the coincidental nature of our understanding and she was, even in the face of the documentation, somewhat reluctant to concede that I had played a role in her process. She did, in the end, do so.

I was left with an uneasy sense of the success of this particular DJSB exchange being dependent on chance. As well, it seemed clear that the chance element was supported by Marie's "readiness" to work on the particular issue in her art. Hence coincidence in timing was significant, just as coincidence in life experience.

d. Joey R

Joey R was not working on a culminating project and so it was not easy to see a particular response he might have had to such as with the Concordia and UTM participants. However, the anxious themes of his sketches were apparent, and his final piece seemed to sum up the impact of that anxiety.

When I spoke to Joey R the sources of his anxiety were clearer. They encompassed changes in his life, uncertainty about the future, conflict with his parents (especially his mother), concerns about the sociopathic clients with whom he worked and with whom (at least in part) he identified. This identification, I expected, caused him some anxiety. He wanted to rebel but not be a "jerk," as he put it.

None of these concerns had stopped him from sketching or from communicating. His communications however, had been generalized to his age group and not specific, until

the interview, to his life. He had been able, I thought, to carry on the exchange fairly well though the lack of a culminating project left me with some questions. He had not participated to the same level as Marie, for example.

Like Sharon and Marie, Joey R also said in the interview that it was my ability to be sympathetic and trustworthy that made the whole exchange workable.

e. Alice

Alice had been able, as had Joey R, to carry on the DJSB fairly successfully. She had moved more readily than Joey R to sketches that dealt with her life, but her comments on them had been somewhat abstract. This separation of the images from their affect she confirmed in her interview when she noted that she did not want anyone to know her. Keeping back her feeling about what she was depicting was a strategy to achieve this “mysteriousness.”

Like the other participants she had many features of her personal landscape that caused her anxiety and reduced her ability to trust me, or anyone. She revealed in the interview. The distancing of her feelings from the process seemed to me to be a coping strategy but one that would weaken her ability to be creative and reflective in her work. It seemed unlikely that, at the time of DJSB exchange, she could have carried out the kind of integrated project that Marie accomplished. Her state of mind at the time of the interview seemed to have improved noticeably, but as I have already noted, the DJSB exchange was over for Alice and me. Here again timing was an issue in the relative success of the exchange.

f. Alida

Like Marie, Alida seemed to have been able to take the issues that were pertinent (disruptive) and develop art images connected to them in a resolved manner. She confirmed this in the interview.

Like Marie, she was also reluctant to admit that I had played a large role in her art making. I was there as guide and support but Alida, in her mind, simply went with the best idea. In doing so she produced many supporting documents, many images and many ideas. While this was welcome to me it seemed that she was over-producing and that indicated some anxiety. She did not identify this, but she did say that she felt that she wanted to do unique work, again much like Hubert. While she was clearly creative and reflective, and I remained supportive, I had a sense that something was never clear in the exchange, so I had to rank her lower than Marie.

g. Opal

Opal's exchange had been more or less awkward, as I have said. I had ranked her both initially, and then after further analysis, as the least creative and reflective of the participants. After the interview I did not change that ranking but I was much more sympathetic to her position. She had recognized two sources of anxiety in the DJSB exchange during the interview. A critical one was her lack of trust of me as the teacher. That was not a feeling that she revealed directly but indirectly through the interview and her questioning of me. Secondly, she was anxious about what she perceived as the level of indiscretion about personal narrative details for which the projects seemed to call.

These two forces really made it impossible for her to participate as much as had the others. Given that she had done a good job, but had mostly kept things at an informational level. I had also had some anxieties around her. I had a southern Ireland background and she was from the north. Although she did not know my background, I was reluctant to bring it forward, and as a result I did not challenge the form that her first project took. That was probably for the good because even when I did challenge her in the second project she brought in her anxiety about "the teacher" and things went badly enough. Even so I had some part in her lack of creative reflective achievement. My own anxiety as to whether Opal would perform in the DJSB exchange, as I wanted her to, interfered just as it had with Hubert.

h. Sal

Sal was creative and reflective but he produced the least amount of text. As well, although he was quite clear on what he was doing from an artistic point of view, he was not able to link his work to his life in the text with the same depth as shown in his images. In this he was somewhat like Sharon. In the interview one clear anxiety that emerged for Sal was not knowing what his work meant; coupled to that was a fear that others would misinterpret it. Although he did not say so, that could have easily included me. As well, in the interview Sal indicated that he did not see my role as specific in the process but as supportive. That I was there inquiring into his process was enough for him. Sal seemed to me to be on the verge of making conscious his process and his ideation and the affect related to the work but he was not quite there. This, coupled with the paucity of his text, led me to reassign him to a lower rank.

4. A reconsideration of patterns of interchange in the DJSB exchange.

a. Introduction

While the patterns of participant response seemed to be more or less similar, a key element, which the interviews had added, was that of “personal narrative history”. It seemed to me that this issue should be made clearer within the response categorizations. As well, with regard to this issue and to the making of art, was the question of anxiety and how successfully the participant could sustain it and appropriately suspend closure. I modified the patterns of participant response to include references to personal narrative history, but I left out references to anxiety since it seemed to me that any move away from a reflective response (as in (4. a. i.)) was caused by anxiety, at least in part. In other words, I understood moves towards an overly technical response, a response heavily weighted to reverie, a ruminative response, a controlling response as a sign of the effect of anxiety. It led the participant away from creative reflective problem finding and solving based on an integrated personal narrative history.

I also thought that I had to add another category of response. This was a “ruminating response that led to emerging imagery and that was based in personal narrative history.” I saw this partly in Sharon but also in the Sheridan participants Joey R and Alice. I also saw it at times in other participants who were seeking solutions in a kind of preconscious manner.

With these categories I thought that I could specify the range of responses for each participant, but that I would be less focused on limiting each participant to just one pattern as I had initially determined in the “Concordia pilot”. In the end I thought that each participant exhibited different proportions of these patterns depending on their relative success or failure to enter into creative reflective art making through the DJSB exchange.

b. Revised patterns of student response

- i. Self-reflective response integrating inner feelings derived from personal narrative history and technical resolution of art problem.
- ii. Self-reflective response focused on solving technical problems without much reference to inner states.
- iii. Poetic response paralleling image production in text and referencing personal narrative history, but not focused too much on solving art problems.
- iv. Ruminating response, chewing over a fixed idea without much indication of finding or solving new art problems.
- v. Ruminating response leading to emerging imagery based in personal narrative history
- vi. Ignoring response not discussing inner issues, making of own art and generally not acknowledging pedagogical interventions.

c. Comments on my response patterns

My own response patterns were modified as a result of the interviews. I became more aware of the ways in which I brought forward my own personal narrative history or else failed to do so. I also began to see my anxiety focused more narrowly on three things: i) getting the participants to be successful in the DJSB exchange in the way that I understood successful; ii) getting the participants to be successful within the time frame of the exchange at each site; iii) avoiding conflict.

While each of these objectives could be justified within the framework of the courses and the sites, they did result in some problems. My wanting the DJSB exchange to be a successful creative reflective process made it harder for me to accept the variations in each participant and to open up the problems they had with the exchange. This was most acute with Opal whose resistance to the “teacher” became apparent in the interview. Pushing the participants to be successful in the time frame limited my interaction with Hubert and generally with the participants at the UTM site. My avoidance of conflict also led me to omit details of my personal narrative history that might have led to more creative and reflective art making on the part of Hubert, Opal and Alida.

As a result of these observations and also considering some of the observations I had made during the construction of the narrative case studies I modified my list of response patterns to include two basic patterns of response modified by sets of sub-patterns.

I recognized a supportive pattern that drew on a number of strategies listed below in Table Four. I noted a restrictive pattern arising out of anxiety and conflict avoidance. In both cases I noted the role played by my recognition of, or avoidance of, personal narrative history. This resulted in a different pattern of response on my part than that I had noted for the participants.

The participants’ original and revised patterns of response were presented in a descending order (though I saw each participant as exhibiting mixed patterns). My original patterns

of response I had seen as mirroring the participants' patterns of response in descending order. However my new patterns were essentially binary. This variation in modeling my responses seemed to represent more clearly what had actually occurred. I had responded in a supportive or a restrictive manner using various strategies.

d. Revised patterns in my responses as a teacher

My own responses as a teacher I linked to the student categories:

i. Supportive to Student response: 4. a. i-vi.

- 1. Explicative**
- 2. Interpretive, and descriptive**
- 3. Mirroring**
- 4. Modeling**
- 5. Referencing personal narrative history**

ii. Limiting response to student patterns 4. a. ii-vi.

- 1. Challenging student response**
- 2. Redirecting to own work**
- 3. Pushing for creative reflective commentary**
- 4. Referring to time frame as a limiting factor**
- 5. Avoidance of personal Narrative history**

With these changes to the response patterns that I recognized in the participants and also in myself, I believed that I had a chance at a better descriptive summary of the outcomes. Hence I turned to a re-assessment of the rankings I had established on the creative reflective activity of the participants and myself in the DJSB exchange.

5. A Revised ranking of the creative reflective activity of the participants and myself

After I had interviewed the participants and categorized the patterns of response for them and myself, I revised my assessment of where I thought they stood in terms of relative success and failure in their creative reflective practice in the DJSB exchanges. The participant ranking is noted in the Table Three below; I moved Joey R and Hubert up and Sharon and Alice down and I did not allow any ties.

a. Post interview ranking of participants' creative reflectivity in the DJSB

Table Three: Post interview ranking of participants' creative reflectivity in the DJSB

Participant	Rank
Marie	1
Alida	2
Sal	3
Hubert	4
Alice	5
Sharon	6
Joey R	7
Opal	8

I had refined my understanding of my response pattern, but I did not modify my ranking of my engagement following the interviews. I did move my response ranking for Joey R up. It seemed to me that I had dealt with him more as I had with Sharon and Alice. I also eliminated any ties.

b. Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the participants

Table Four: Rankings of teacher participation in the creative reflective processes of the participants

Participant	Rank
Marie	1
Alida	2
Sharon	3
Alice	4
Joey R	5
Sal	6
Hubert	7
Opal	8

These rankings represent my view of my involvement in a creative reflective manner with the participants, but not necessarily their own activity. For example, Sal and Hubert have a higher ranking for their own creative reflective activity than I had for my interaction with them..

6. Concluding remarks

The ranking of the participants was not meant as a final judgment of their ultimate capacities to engage in mutually creative and reflective art making. However it did reflect how some of the emergent themes brought forward through the process of the entire project had affected my estimation of what had happened for the participants and myself.

As in other processes of the project, this assessment (based first on the narrative case studies, and then modified following the interviews) revealed that such rankings had to be

emergent and subject to ongoing refinement. In this project the concluding refinement reflected the results of the follow-up interview which itself seemed to open up the possibilities for creative reflective art making in the participants' futures.

Chapter Nine: Success and Failure in the DJSB Exchanges

A. Introduction

My basic aim in this report has been to try and to determine two main things and draw a conclusion:

1. How did the dialogue journal-sketchbook play a role in the mutual reflective creativity of the participants, as seen in their art making?

First I wanted to know how the dialogue journal-sketchbook played a role in the mutual reflective creativity of the participants in developing their projects, or in coming to themes that they felt important in their art making. Art educators (Dewey, 1934; Beittel, 1972, 1973; Zurmuehlen, 1990; Stout, 1995) have argued for the importance of reflective thinking in creative processes. Researchers into creativity (Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels, 1976; Perkins, 1982, 1986, 1994, 1995) have argued for the importance of reflective thinking as a part of the framework of creative process. Researchers in reflective thinking (Schon, 1983, 1985; Von Wright, 1992; LaBoskey, 1994) have argued for its creative potential in a variety of contexts. I entered into this project with such a framework of previous concern. At the same time, in the context of the Dialogue Journal Sketchbook, I was interested in the possibilities of mutual reflective thinking and of mutual participation in the creative process. Methodologically, in the specific context of dialogue journals, I mapped the kinds of function codes used characteristically in that research onto models of creative and reflective thinking in order to construct narratives. I used these to establish my answer to this first question and also the second.

2. How was my own practice as a teacher revealed by the DJSB exchange and how did it condition the dialogue with my students?

The other main issue that I wanted to address was how my own practice as a teacher was revealed by and how it conditioned the dialogue with my students. Researchers in the

field of art education (Eisner, 1972; Cszikszentmihalyi and Scheifle, 1992; Goodlad 1992) have lamented the dearth of research into the actual classroom and studio practices of art educators. These same art educators note that where research has been done it has had little effect on practice.

In my thesis I hoped to bring out the importance of a mutually reflective and creative dialogue in art education and, through revealing my own “personal knowledge practices” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1992), add to the developing bodies of narrative about what actually occurs in a classroom/teaching context. My practices, as a teacher and researcher, may then be seen as “exemplars” (Goodlad, 1992; Stake, 1994) for other art educators.

3. The DJSB exchange was both a failure and a success

As is clear already, at first glance the DJSB exchange as a means of developing a mutual reflective creative practice was an initial failure more than it was a success in the cases of the participants that I chose to study. There was no simple cause for this, but I came to see that the failures, and the successes were determined by the personal narrative histories of the participants. At the same time, the failures in the DJSB exchange were a part of those histories and, in the process of investigating them through my follow-up inquiry, it also became clear to me that the story was not over. The DJSB, the presentation of the case study narrative and the follow-up interview were all parts of the same process and together they continued to open up the participants and myself to new possibilities. In that sense I would have to judge the DJSB as a success. In this way I believe I can, in a way, be more positive than LaBoskey (1994) about the possibility of students and student teachers developing a capacity for reflective thinking.

I must also note that the school context, as it was constructed at the time of the projects, of the DJSB did play a limiting role.

In what follows I will try to focus these conclusions more specifically, and indicate what is the overall importance of this study for art education.

B. Narrative inquiry and the importance of personal narrative history in re-storying

1. Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry methods rely upon the construction of narratives in order to give shape or meaning to the event with which they are concerned (Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1988; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1992; Carter, 1992). The claim is that the narrative represents what has occurred as much or more accurately than any model because it can include a richer, more inclusive description of the occurrence(s). It also brings to the fore the shaping consciousness of the narrator, making it clearer what role the narrator plays in giving meaning to the situation described. This presence is somewhat elided in model building approaches.

I had initially engaged my participants in the dialogue sketchbook journal through writing about their proposed artwork or their sketches. I had moved from this exchange to a more generalized level of understanding through coding both the texts and the images of the exchange (see Chapter Three). This was not an attempt to seek true generalizations but did allow me to characterize the event quantitatively against the background of the overall exchange within a rather limited group of eight participants. I used that information to map linguistic actions and image making acts onto a combined model of creative and reflective practice.

2. Plot

My next step was to go beyond the models to a narrative of what I thought had happened. This narrative was still built upon the coded texts and images. This seemed to me to be an important step because it helped to maintain the factual base established by the coding as the substance of the narrative. However, it aimed at giving the exchange a shape over the

time of the exchange, in other words a plot. As such the DJSB had crises or turning points that marked places where it went in one direction rather than another and, in the best sense, resulted in a positive resolution of the complication. This was, of course, from my point of view, but the “emplotment” (Ricoeur, 1988) of the exchanges produced a shape and a meaning that I could discuss with the participants.

To inquire further into the truthfulness of the narrative I gave each of the participants a copy of their respective DJSB narrative case study to read. I followed this with an interview in which I aimed at re-storying the original narrative (Lanzara, 1991) and determining if I had missed any key issues. In fact I had.

3. Re-storying through the interviews

I had not been able to see the lacunae in the initial narrative until I interviewed the participants. In every case, even in those of the most successful participants, the interviews made it clear that the personal narratives of each of the participants had an important effect on the course of each DJSB exchange. This effect had not been revealed through the coding and initial narrative interpretation process.

The latter had, however, focused my attention on certain moments of crisis in the DJSB exchanges. The ways in which the participants, with my help, had resolved these, became the basis for making further judgments on the relative successes and failures of each exchange.

At the beginning of each respective interview the participants had agreed on the accuracy of my case study narratives, but then they went on, directly or indirectly, to modify their position through new stories that they told me about their lives. As they disclosed unknown facts about themselves they modified the shape of their story and changed my understanding of the DJSB.

This recalled some of the longitudinal effects noticed by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi in their study (1976). The extent of the variance between what I had originally understood to be the shape of the story of the DJSB seemed in each case to have been determined by decisions that the participants had each made to trust me, or not, during the DJSB (Shafer, 1981; Wetherell and Noddings, 1994).

4. Meaning making

One of the things that supported trust between the participants and me, at the time of the interview, was that I had taken the time and made an effort to construct the narrative case studies. While the participants did not wholly accept my construction, its very existence seemed to give meaning to what they had done and in so doing validated their achievements. At the same time this meaning was negotiable and further construction took place through the interview for both the participants and myself. In essence, my study, as a reflection on the DJSB exchange, provided an ongoing interpretation of the shape of the part of the lives of the participants (and myself) that had been expressed through the DJSB. This constructive and reconstructive process seems to me to be an important aspect of the DJSB exchange because it demonstrated to the participants how reflection on a situation establishes and modifies our understanding of it. This is an essential aim of narrative inquiry that seems validated by this study. This outcome suggests, that a practice of the DJSB in a classroom should include the constructive and reconstructive follow-up if it is to realize its goals.

5. The DJSB exchange seemed to have had a therapeutic impact on some participants

While the goal of the DJSB exchange was not intended to be therapeutic, some of the participants identified it as such. This seemed to flow from the meaning making aspect of the narrative case studies, at least in part. By giving a shape to a part of their lives the DJSB exchange provided a unity or a wholeness to their experience. This of course, is the aim of all “experience” (Dewey, 1934) but it is epitomized in art making. Insofar as the

exchanges had an aesthetic unity they had some generalized therapeutic impact. It seems that this impact could have been amplified through a greater emphasis on the aesthetic experience made possible through the reflective activity at the heart of the DJSB exchanges.

As well, the DJSB exchange seemed to have offered some of the participants a chance to vent, though in the best situations that was a prologue to reflection.

Finally, it seemed to have offered some participants a sense of contact with someone who was “interested” or who cared about their life and their art making. That acted in a therapeutic manner for them but perhaps also in a “human” manner, one that they perceived as being absent from their “school” experience . This latter “therapeutic” aspect of the exchange points to some gaps in participant, or student experience in school situations. This also linked to the issue off trust with which I deal in a section below.

6. Personal narrative history over-determined the success or failure of the DJSB exchanges

As discussed in Chapter Seven, the personal narrative histories of the participants, as revealed in the interviews, in many ways were more important to the outcome of the DSJB exchange than my interventions in class. While it was clear that my interventions had results they did so only within the framework of the personal narrative histories of the participants. I did not know what these important issues were except in the case of Marie who was able to bring forward her stories. This implies that DJSB could be more effective if the personal narrative histories of the participants, and the teacher, could be brought into the exchange. There are some constraints, however, that mitigate against such a strategy. I will discuss these in following sections.

C. The emergent role of “trust” in the DJSB exchange

1. Assuming trust begs the question

I had not actually paid much attention to the issue of trust during the activity of the DJSB. Part of my approach was to follow the participants and to let them develop the dialogue at their own pace, and around their own interests. I was not exactly interested in whether or not they trusted me, but in whether we could work together on a visual project in a mutually creative and reflective manner. As I went about the follow-up interviews I began to realize that my original stance begged the question of trust.

2. Shared world-views aided trust in some instances

Some sense of a shared world-view between the participants and myself did assist in building trust. Sharon and Marie had referred to that, and both Joey R and Alice had some commonalities with me re our background that made understanding easier. At the UTM site there were greater differences and less trust, for example, with Opal.

At the same time, the narrative constructions that I had derived from the DJSB exchanges had shown, for example, that Sharon, who said that her trust of me had made the dialogue possible, really didn't participate in a dialogic manner. Joey R, who seemed to indicate that I made the dialogue work by being interested in him and his art, kept the exchanges on a somewhat impersonal level. Commonalities helped but weren't everything.

3. Self-disclosure by the teacher aided trust

It was only to Marie, whose images touched off a memory of mine, that I told stories about my own life; because these seemed to “validate” her concerns, she trusted me with the relevant personal narratives that lay behind her visual project.

For the most part, I told very few stories about my life and how that impinged on my art practice, my teaching or my research project. While I told myself that I was trying to stay out of the way of the participants (and some did say they appreciated that restraint) I believe now that I was, in a way similar to my participants, not very trusting of the situation.

Since the instance of self-disclosure aided trust I believe now that I should have found ways to tell the participants more of my own stories, and that would have helped make the DJSB exchange more successful. The follow-up interviews seemed to confirm that view.

4. The follow-up interviews helped to create greater trust but revealed some of the problems inherent in the school” context

The follow-up interview seemed to provide some elements that helped overcome the lack of trust and to open up our “dialogue” in a more complete manner. Most of the participants appreciated that I had taken the time to write up the narrative case study because it provided a shape, even if incomplete, to their experience. As well, because I was more forthcoming with them about my own life on those occasions, the interviews developed on a more equal footing than had the DJSB.

At the same time, the interview took place outside of the original classroom construct and outside of the asymmetrical teacher-student relationship (Wetherell and Noddings, 1994; Gadamer, 1994) characteristic of the course settings for the project. At the time of the interview each participant had moved on in their life, and most had a stronger sense of themselves. No longer were they dependent on my reaction to them, as they might have seen it at the time of the DJSB exchange, in order to achieve a grade. In fact, because I was asking them to help me with my research through the interview, I was dependent in some way on them. As I have pointed out in the interview reports, Alice and Opal each took some advantage of that, though in different ways.

I believe that because of the greater symmetry in the situation, in most cases the follow-up interviews were more revealing of the material that underlay the projects and sketching that the participants undertook. In other words, the original context of the DJSB seemed to be such that it worked against a completely mutual creative and reflective dialogue. The follow-up interview, because it mitigated those circumstances, allowed for an assertion of a counter-claim on the part of the participants against my initial narrative of the DJSB exchanges. In this way some of what Gadamer has referred to as the “authoritative form of welfare work” (Gadamer, 1994, p. 360) that exists in the teacher-pupil relationship was moved towards a more open dialogue. That this occurred “after school”, so to speak, is unfortunately telling not only for my project but for all attempts to engage students in reciprocal reflective exchanges (LaBoskey, 1994) within the current school structures, no matter what the level.

It seemed that the follow-up interviews continued to open up the dialogue, begun in the original exchange, in another way. A longer-term process could have had more effect here than the immediate project allowed. A study of the reflective, creative image making processes of student art makers within the context of the school studio seems to reach out into the lives of those students in a retrospective, and, I would say, a projective manner. This seems to me to be difficult to encompass within the current structures of studio art education, especially those which emphasize cognitive and skill development.

D. The roles of chance and readiness

1. Chance

Chance seemed to play an important role in the DJSB exchange as I indicated with Marie but also with all of the other participants. This seemed to be an extension of the force of personal narrative history as I have already discussed. I, and the participants, where chance appeared to play an important role, found this somewhat unsettling. Perhaps this is a side effect of our technically rational culture, but to admit the role of chance as a deciding factor in these exchanges remains problematic for me, especially where it

seemed to play a negative role. I did take advantage of chance and I tried to ameliorate it where that seemed necessary. Even so chance remained, unpredictable in its impact. Some greater consideration of this element in teaching seems to me to be a project for further research.

2. Readiness

Another way of regarding chance in the DJSB exchange is to refer to student and teacher “readiness”. This is a term used by LaBoskey (1994) in her study of reflective practice among in service teachers. In her study, when someone was “ready,” success was more likely. My study confirms that concept within the area of the DJSB project. Where a participant like Marie was ready to deal with her art making in a creative reflective manner, success was more likely. Marie knew that she was ready; other participants knew that they were not. However, as I pointed out earlier, I had no way, at least within this project, of knowing who was ready. All I had to rely on was the student’s admission to the course and level at which I found them. At best I can say that as far as creative reflective activity in the DJSB exchange went, this meant that my expectations were grounded in chance to a noticeable extent. While one might argue that successful DJSB projects need some way of assessing “readiness,” what my research project did was to establish just who, among my participants, was “ready.” Of course, at that stage the DJSB project was over.

E. Practices within the DJSB

1. The DJSB project involved participants and myself in a set of practices

The DJSB project involved participants and myself in a set of practices derived from the practices of artists. These included sketching and writing. These practices were meant to focus the participants on problem finding and solving with regard to their art making. They were to bring together creative reverie and creative reflection on that reverie, to enable them to make art and to understand how and why they made art. These practices,

ironically, engendered anxiety in the participants and so, in a way, they were self-limiting.

2. Sketching and artists' sketchbooks

My assumption was, following Arnheim (1962), Szekeley (1982), Kirwin (1987), Fish and Scrivener (1990) and others, that artists reveal more of themselves in their sketches and sketchbooks than in their finished works. Artists reveal the working processes of their minds as they develop their visual ideas. While this may be true in artists' sketchbooks (and I now think further research into the issue may be needed) in the case of student artists, the sketchbooks, in my study, often did not function (as the literature on artist's sketchbooks had led me to expect) in quite the same way that they did for artists.

The participants' developed the sketchbooks in response to classroom/studio situations. They did not arise out of the participants' own ongoing practice. While the course went on, so did the sketchbook activity. When it was over, for most of the participants, the sketchbook activity ceased or was significantly reduced. Only where the participants were continuing in school (e.g. Alida and Sal, at the UTM site) did the participants continue using a sketchbook as a significant part of their art making. Moreover, only one participant, Hubert, at the time of the follow-up interview, had continued even making art as a large part of his activity. Others were making art in fits and starts, or not at all. Hence the sketchbook had almost completely receded into the background.

It seems to me that my assumption that student artists can replicate an apparently fundamental activity of visual artists by maintaining a sketchbook, journal or diary of their visual ideas, is flawed. The participants seemed to have engaged in the activity because they had to, as a condition of the course, and not because they were intrinsically so motivated. At some basic level, then, the participants' sketchbooks were not artists' sketchbooks, though they may have looked like them in some way, or were used by the participants in ways in which artists use their sketchbooks.

It could be argued that the DJSB exchanges were learning opportunities that were appropriate for students. However, it remains to be seen whether any of the participants will return to the practice of keeping and using a sketchbook as artists have done and still do. At the time of the follow-up interviews the prospects were not promising.

3. Dialogue journals and self-reflective writing

If the sketchbooks were artifacts of the “school” framework in which the participants used them, then what about the dialogue journal aspect of the exchange? Dialogue journals, according to the definition of Staton, Shuy, Peyton and Reed, (1988, 1989, 1993) were written exchanges between teachers and students on whatever was being taught and studied. They existed both as tools and as records of ongoing relationships in school classrooms and they focused on work being done.

The participants in my study were also involved in the dialogue journaling aspect of the exchange at my behest. They did not continue it after the courses were over, with another artist friend. This could be expected and seems more acceptable than the dropping of the sketching activity. Indeed, in the interviews, some expressed a sense of loss at the absence of the written exchange.

As central to the DJSB as the sketching were the reflective written comments, which could have continued without an interlocutor. However, just as they had ceased sketching, the participants did not continue writing about their art in a reflective manner. Some indicated that without that mutual or even self-reflective writing that they found it hard to overcome the problems that arose in their making of art or in the development of their ideas. One, Alida, who was still in school at the time of the interview, indicated that she still wrote about her sketches and that when she did not do so, she did less well in her idea development and in the final outcomes of her projects. Another, Marie, from the Concordia site, said that she had ceased to write about her visual ideas, and, as a result, she was not as effective in her art making. These were the only two who had a continuing

clear sense of the journaling or writing aspect of the exchange as a useful, or possibly useful tool in their current art making.

It would seem that the DJSB exchanges did not have a lasting impact on the practices of the participants regarding sketching or writing as reflective modes of inquiry once they left school or the class in which the activity was based.

4. Words and images in the art making process: problem finding and solving through creative reverie and reflective thinking

a. Introduction

The DJSB project engaged the participants and myself in a relationship through words and images. Somewhat differing results accrued to each mode. As well, at different levels of discourse, each seemed take a different priority. At times the role of images, in relationship to the text as a means of establishing understanding (Arnheim, 1969; Pavio, 1991), seemed to be more to the fore. At the narrative level of discourse the role of text to convey meaning over time (Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1988; Lodge, 1994) seemed more important to an understanding of the DJSB than the images.

b. The participants' texts dealt mostly with the reflective processing related to the image making.

The participants' texts dealt mostly with the reflective processing related to the image making in which they were engaged. The texts focused on the rational commentary of the participants and myself on those images, discussing and specifying movement from one stage to another, the use of exemplars, the formal analysis of relationships within images, explanations and so on. Occasionally, however, the texts seemed more connected to the processes of reverie which I have seen as embodying the primary process thinking characteristic of creativity. This was apparent indirectly, in references to anxiety on the part of the participant, but more directly so when the text seemed to have moved into

poetry, as, for example, with Sharon; anxious soliloquies as with Sharon and Alida; or brainstorming as in the case of Marie and to some extent Alida.

c. The form of the DJSB exchange emphasized the rational and reflective capacity of language

Some of the emphasis on this rational and reflective capacity of language may have been due to the form of the DJSB, which asked the participants to comment each week on their visual work. It did not ask them to brainstorm using linguistic forms though some, particularly Marie, did so. That the DJSB framed the use of language in a particular way could be seen in Marie's work insofar as she presented a page of linguistic brainstorming and then commented on it from the point of view of her DJSB communications with me. On the other hand, Sharon's linguistic entries were predominantly non-linear or non-reflective and so seemed more reverie-like. She was unique in this however, in the DJSB exchanges.

d. The images presented by the participants revealed reflective problem solving processes

The images presented by the participants revealed reflective problem solving processes as well. This could be seen in the progression from doodling to individual studies, to compositional sketches, and finally to the completed work. These processes were most clearly seen at the Concordia and UTM sites. As well, in some cases, the use of diagrammatic sketches emphasized the abstracting and rational cognition aspects of the image making. However, the images also, and to a somewhat greater extent than the texts, revealed the processes of reverie, of creative primary process thinking (Arnheim, 1962; Erhrenzweig, 1970; Storr, 1976; Rose, 1980).

This was apparent in the symbolism used by all participants in their work. It was also present in the lack of clarity in many of the sketches where the participants seemed to searching for form at a level where intuitive choices were being made about the

directions in which the sketches should go. Thus, the sketches seemed to embody or emphasize the creative aspect of the DJSB exchange, while the texts were more reflective and rational.

e. Images preceded text in the DJSB exchange

In the exchange, because both texts and images were presented together, it was hard to see which came first. However, because the images seemed to place a greater emphasis on primary process thinking (Arnheim, 1962) than did the texts, and because the texts generally seemed to convey reflective and rational commentary on the image making process as well as the images, it seems that the images did come first. This seems to me to strengthen the body of research supporting Arnheim's position on the primacy of visual thinking (1962, 1969). The follow-up interviews, while taken from a relatively small group, seemed to confirm what the code analyses indicated. Most of the participants, when I asked about the relationship of text to image in their process, said that they came to their images first. Text was a way of solidifying their ideas or perceptions and, as such, followed on image making. The small group of participants leaves this at an anecdotal level, but their confirmation of what the text and image code analyses indicated seems to be further confirmation of the position taken by Arnheim.

f. At the level of narrative, text provided access to meaning.

There was however, another level of interpretation in the project: that provided by the construction of a narrative from the coded texts and images in each DJSB exchange. I have already pointed out that I constructed such narratives in an effort to encompass information that the coded interpretations did not cover. I was looking for a shape or a plot-like structure to the exchanges with which I could confront the participants.

When I did so I was engaged, as I have pointed out, in a re-storying process based on a further extension of my awareness of the participant's personal narratives. In this frame of reference the true shape of the exchange and a greater understanding of it are

established only through the language, which allowed the participants and me to develop a sense of the movement and the shape of the exchange in time. Since the meanings of the events are only established through narrative, there is way in which the narrative (and language) are primary.

Only through language can one make sense of what happened. Language employed for narrative purposes may follow events but its effects are primary in the coalescing of experience and in the operation of cognition. This position (Lodge, 1994) suggests that meaning making or thinking occurs not through an image making process but through a shaping that only narrative language allows for. My study seems to indicate this to be true at the level of narrative. This lends credence to the practice of narrative inquiry and story (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Carter 1993), as a means of research, and as a mode of reporting the results of that research.

F. My own practices in the DJSB exchange as exemplary

1. Describing and reflecting on my own practices in the DJSB exchange

A part of my study has been to describe simply what happened in an art studio classroom, at least in terms of the practice of the DJSB. In that process I have been concerned with what my participants did, but also with what I did. By reflecting on my own practices (Bean and Zulich, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Wetherell and Noddings, 1994; LaBoskey, 1994), I have hoped to provide some description of an art education activity, the DJSB, and also to look at ways in which it could be developed creatively. To some extent I have tried to bring to bear on my own teaching what my participants were using in their art making.

2. A Review of my method

First of all, as teachers usually do, I established a method of routine proceeding in the classroom and a set of expectations around the classroom assignments. Then I prepared

the students for the DJSB exchanges. While I was working with three different sites and with three different academic levels, I aimed to make certain that the essential character of the DJSB was followed: a weekly sketching practice and a written commentary on that by the participants and by myself. I was guided by the experience of my “Concordia pilot project”. In short, the students had an assignment within a set of expectations. I have already noted the possible negative effects of that.

Once the DJSB process was complete in the classroom I asked for volunteers to engage in a follow-up study. Once I had these, I focused my coding and narrative constructions on those volunteers. From these I chose eight based on what I thought were departures from the ordinary. In all of this the “Concordia pilot project” set the tone. In short, I chose the participants who stood out in some way, at least from my viewpoint. Here my personal narrative played a role.

3. My practices within the DJSB exchanges

a. I focused on text responses.

Within the DJSB exchanges I concentrated on text responses and did almost no drawing. There are only one or two instances of the latter, and they seemed to have little or no impact. In my interpretations and analyses I worked towards a common coding procedure and common coding categories for both my comments and those of the participants.

b. My response strategies mirrored or compensated for the participant strategies

When I reviewed the code assignments to my texts I found that I had tended either to mirror the activities of the participants or to compensate for what I saw as gaps. I had explained what I was thinking more often than I did anything else, much like the participants.

This had depended on the participants' texts and images, and what I thought that they needed from me. For example, Sharon didn't explain enough so I did more. Marie seemed to be clear about what she was doing so I explained less.

To support my explanations I framed and developed ideas. As well, I noted interest and significance more than the participants did because I felt it partly my role to tell them what I saw as interesting or important in what they were doing. I tried to strike a balance between encouraging and giving directions.

I gave directions in individual cases depending on whether or not I thought that the participant was staying with an idea, developing it and linking it appropriately to the sources from which it sprang. If I thought that individual participants were weak in a certain function, such as "re-framing", I compensated. In all of this I seemed somewhat like Winnicott's "good enough" mother (Winnicott, 1971) responding to the participants, as they needed it and within a set of beliefs that I had about what they needed. I was providing a situation in which "caring" (Wetherell and Noddings, 1994) was important.

c. I avoided direct references to my personal narrative history

Unlike the participants, I had next to no autobiographical responses and I only told very few stories. This had an ambiguous effect from the participants' point of view. My telling a personal story made Marie see me as trustworthy, but others, such as Alida, felt that my stories would have overwhelmed them.

d. My anxieties modified how I supported the participants in their tasks

I tended to respond in the DJSB interchanges to support the participants in their task. Without overdoing it I was attentive to their needs as they arose in the exchange. I was there when they needed me in the ways in which they needed me, or so I thought. The follow-up interviews modified that view somewhat, since they revealed that the participants had held back certain aspects of their situation and so effectively prevented

me from responding to their real situation. At the same time my own anxieties, my own agenda meant that some of my “responses” to their needs were, at least in part, responses to my own situation. Something like this I should have expected, given the asymmetrical nature of the situation.

4. The success of the DJSB exchanges as an exemplar was limited

a. Not all students want to be reflective initially

In the end, I could say that I acted as one might have expected me to act: like a teacher who saw their role as that of a guide or mentor, and who saw themselves as one who had, from experience and practice, a sense of what one should do if one wished to become an artist and/or a teacher of creative artists. My participants, it seems, subscribed to that goal in a more limited manner.

Here again I recall LaBoskey’s attempt to teach reflective practice to pre-service teachers (1994). Her conclusion is that not all teacher trainees want to be reflective, whether or not others see that as a good thing. It leads LaBoskey to question whether applicants for teacher training should not be screened out of the process on their ability to be reflective. I can understand her frustration, though I think that my study points out that the real issues in teaching often reside in the personal narratives of the participants, and so outside of the school. If one can find a way to deal with these then one can teach creative reflective activity over time.

b. I had limited success using the DJSB as a teaching practice

I set out to provide an exemplar of the DJSB and of an inquiry into teacher and student practices (Goodlad, 1992; Stake, 1994; Morse, 1994). I had hoped that in my success that I would encourage other teachers to take up the DJSB as a means of teaching art and as a means of inquiring into the practices of themselves and their students.

I believe that I have had some limited success. Most of the participants declared the DJSB useful in some manner and only one found it somewhat intrusive. On the other hand, only one of the participants realized the full possibilities of the DJSB exchange.

c. As a teaching practice in itself the DJSB is just another practice

This failure was, in part, a reflection of my initially limited goals, but it seems largely a result of the impact of the personal narratives of the participants. They came to the exchange already formed in some fundamental manner and that was reinforced by the limitations imposed, in part, by being in “school.” The student participants all did well what they had to do, but they did not, on the whole, engage in the DJSB at a level that would have brought about a mutual creative reflective practice in a complete manner. Some of that I discovered and also offset through the follow-up interviews. These interviews, happening outside of my class, allowed the participants to tell me what they were really enduring and what was really at issue in their work.

I would have to say that as a practice in itself the DJSB is just another practice and its efficacy is limited unless ways can be found to ensure that the participants feel safe enough (Wetherell, Noddings, 1994) to reveal what is at issue in their life. I must admit to a certain pessimism around the likelihood of that happening. Opening students up to the implications of their personal narrative for their work, both in school and out, seems to remain a problem that has not been solved (Wetherell and Noddings, 1991; LaBoskey, 1994).

d. As an inquiry method the DJSB also had limitations

As an inquiry method the DJSB also had limitations for the same reasons. What could be seen from it, however, was what was working and what wasn’t working in the DJSB exchanges. This required time and follow-up both within the constraints of the courses and outside of them. While I think that this could be done, it would be made easier by some further work to create instruments based on more limited code lists than I and other

dialogue journal researchers have used, to allow the average studio teacher the means to carry out such an inquiry. Writing up the narrative case studies is also a time-consuming task, and if all this didn't lead to real change, I suspect that the motivation to do such a study would be minimal. It was only in the follow-up interviews and their implications for long-term study that I saw the opening of a possibility for real learning. This suggests to me an engagement that would require some years, and points to a completely different model of education than is now operational in our schools.

Perhaps that would not be a bad thing. Certainly, just to maintain the initial DJSB is time consuming. Perhaps that would have its own reward if other researchers and I were to take on the task of following their students through larger sections of their life. This does not mean, from my point of view, that we would take away any of the responsibility; our students have to eventually find their way and to accomplish their tasks. It does mean that teachers might be seen as actively involved at least in the ongoing professional life of their students as they move on from the academy. My study seems to suggest that this kind of mentoring, where acceptable to both parties, holds some promise for future growth that is linked to, and that develops the personal narratives of the participants as well as the mentors.

G. The school context

1. School context issues were emergent and limiting

I did not make the school context an issue when I began this thesis project, but as I wrote up the narrative case studies and even more in the following interviews, I discovered that “school” as experienced by the participants and me, seemed to have real and specific limiting effects on the success of the DJSB exchange. Some of these I have discussed independently above. The most important seem to be: a) asymmetrical teacher-student roles; b) readiness, timing; c) time frame of courses.

2. Asymmetrical teacher-student roles

The most problematic effect here seemed to be that this reduced the likelihood of trust from the participant side primarily, but also in part from my side. It seemed that participants would seek out activity that would win them approval, especially in the form of a good grade. This was apparent at all sites. Where the assignment was open-ended participant anxiety focused on “what does he want?” (Alice, Interview). Where the assignment was set, my suggestions were taken as guide for approved action. While such responses were not universally detrimental they seemed to be a limiting issue, to some degree, for all participants. Teachers in schools give grades and act as gate-keepers. There is no way to change that without changing schools. Reductions in teacher “accountability” for student preparedness seem unlikely at this time.

3. Readiness

All of my educational experience has shown me that school systems provide for assessed advancement in the learning of skills and concepts. Students advance to levels based on achievement assessed by teachers skilled and knowledgeable in a subject area, and each succeeding teacher assumes a certain level of learned skill and understanding. The participants in the DJSB exchange, for the most part, understood the procedures of the DJSB exchange, but they had apparently little practice in self-reflection when they arrived. The DJSB was meant, in part, to teach them how to do that, but it also assumed some ability in the area of creative reflection since all of the students had studied art at one time or another.

At the same time (and this seemed driven by their personal narrative histories) they were not, for the most part, ready to be reflective in their creativity nor were they ready to be engaged in a reflective creative dialogue. Part of that lack of “readiness ” could also be attributed to their understanding that they would be assessed on their performance, and so what they wanted was to do it “right”, according to what the teacher wished. To do so effectively they had to disclose the areas of their personal narrative histories that

impinged on their art making. They did not feel safe enough in a situation of assessment to do this. This became clear in the follow-up interviews where, once the assessment was over and done with, they could relate to me more as a colleague or even an adversary.

4. Time-frame of courses

The developing ability of the participants to deal with the anxieties engendered by their own life histories, which in some cases seemed to increase because of the support I provided, seemed to be the key issue here. While school can provide opportunities for growth and increased confidence, these remain idiosyncratically aligned with the readiness of the student.

The time lines for assignment completion within courses and semester are only weakly supportive of some students' readiness. Hence results are always going to be variable. The DJSB exchange was not exempt from this problem. Until schools are "safer" (Wetherell and Noddings, 1994) and until the personal life history of the student can be integrated into the advancement process this problem of readiness will remain.

H. Implications for further research

1. Introduction

My assessment of the results of my project is somewhat pessimistic insofar as the in-class success of the participants and myself in the DJSB exchange. It is more positive in the longer run but for that opportunity to be realized further research into the context of projects like the DJSB seems to be needed.

2. Personal narrative history and "safe schools"

It would seem likely that further exploration of the impact of the student's life prior to and beyond school on tasks undertaken in school could do something to suggest how

such educational reform might be approached. Of interest here would be the work begun by participant researchers like Wetherell and Noddings (1991) and Clandinin and Connelly (1994) who look to connect curriculum to personal narratives of both teacher and student, and to create “safe” places in which this can be done. I set out to operate within the situations as I found them and that imposed certain limits on my research. Research on how different education contexts would support such an activity as the DJSB could help here.

The power of the personal narrative histories of the participants to determine the outcome of the project also points to difficulties that exist in all school curricula in considering individual differences in a way that reduces variations in success. The issues are not just those of intelligence or natural talent.

3. Education based on trust

Related to the issue of personal narrative history and the need to access it in the DJSB exchange was the issue of trust. What produces trust between a teacher and a student is another area for research; specifically in the context of my project a question that remains open for me is whether teacher self-disclosure produces trust or merely provides another element in the student calculation of requirements for success. Both elements appeared in my study. I think further research in this area would be helpful.

This seems especially important as the world-views or culture of the teacher and the student vary as they often do in our multi-cultural society. Implicit in such a society are conflicts both open and hidden such as that between Hubert and I or that between myself and Alida and Opal. Both of those situations entailed specific and powerful political differences. Does self-disclosure assist in such a situation? The DJSB project suggests further work is in order here.

Interestingly, gender issues (which can be divisive and disputatious) emerged in my study but the participants were reluctant to bring these forward into the DJSB exchange even

with encouragement. While much work has been done on gender issues in curriculum development, this outcome here (with Alice, for example) suggests that ongoing research into student attitudes based on their personal narrative history should continue.

4. Education, creativity and anxiety

In all of the DJSB exchanges anxiety played a role. It seemed to be engendered by the creative reflective process itself, both on the participant side and on the teacher side. It seems to me that research into this issue specifically would add to my understanding of how the DJSB actually worked. It seemed that some anxiety was necessary but that too much overwhelmed the process. This conclusion, however, drawn from such a small group is almost anecdotal. It would be interesting and important to have a better sense of how anxiety plays a role in creative reflective activity. Moreover, since anxiety also seems to play a noticeable role in all education for both student and teacher, a clearer understanding of that emotion would assist not only in DJSB projects but in other educational contexts as well.

5. Teaching as “therapeutic”

Linked to this issue of anxiety is the recognition from some students that the DJSB exchange was “therapeutic.” It may well be that there are both conceptual approaches and practices that could be derived from various therapies to assist in teaching. In asking that question one could also ask what the differentiating factors are. For example, all participants exhibited a resistance to allowing my input to influence them and, when it did, to accepting that it had. Was this comparable to the “resistance” in classical psychotherapies? What are the salient differences? Answering such questions could clarify the role of the teacher.

6. Teaching “techniques” vs. emergent teaching

This project was an emergent one; as it went along it became clear that the personal narrative history of each participant emerged into the DJSB exchange and determined its outcome. It is interesting to speculate about what might have happened if I had taught the participants to engage in a design based activity with set steps (Schon, 1985; Perkins, 1986). For example, participants could be trained in reverie and then trained in reflecting on such reverie instead of allowing such activities to come forward on their own as I did. Would the personal narrative histories of the participants remain determinant? Would they be more hidden? I think it would be useful to run such a project with a model or design-like method of art making and set it against this study or one like it to try to answer these questions.

Part of my contention, after all, is that the personal narrative history of each participant emerged as a determining factor in the DJSB exchange.

7. Education based on meaning making

The DJSB project was intended to help the participants both make art and to understand the how and why of that art making. By creating narrative case studies based on the DJSB exchanges and presenting these to the participants, I enabled them to see the shape or the “emplotment,” of their process. This shape was negotiated, or re-storied, through the interviews where the personal narrative histories of the participants came forward and were linked to the DJSB exchange in new ways. The outcome was that the DJSB had a meaning for the participants in terms of their lives.

It would seem useful to inquire into first, the significance of such meaning making as an educational strategy in other settings, and secondly a more practical way for the teacher and students to accomplish this.

8. Similar but larger scale DJSB projects seem necessary to test my conclusions

Of course, since this study was focused on a relatively small group it does not easily support generalizations. I would note, however, that my use of three different sites did offset this weakness to some extent. Be that as it may, larger scale projects seem necessary. As well, I was the participant researcher here and it seems to me that it would be useful to carry out research on similar DJSB projects in which both teacher and students were subjects. Certainly I recognized some of my own limitations and how they affected the project, but a third party researcher might be able to see those issues and others more readily.

I. The long view

Art educators have been interested in the role that reflective thinking plays in creativity. My study confirms that role and suggests that models of creative thinking and reflective thinking run on parallel lines. At the same time it appears that reflective thinking and creative art making are a function of the “personal narrative” of the participant in ways that often are not accessible within the constraints of “school.” Consequently it seems that art education research in these areas needs to expand its approach to incorporate narrative inquiry methods if it wishes to get beyond an instrumental approach to the issues it considers central to the task of opening up the creative possibilities for the student.

Different school organizations seem to be needed to achieve such goals. Beittel (1972) and Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) touched on these issues but skirted the implications for the organization of art education teaching. If teaching and mentoring as an activity were to continue in the life of the student after the class ended and involved the teacher as a continuing mentor, this would produce a far different education system than we currently have, one that to some extent might recall apprenticeships and the guilds. Some historical research could cast light on the pluses and minuses of those older

systems and perhaps suggest how we might adjust them to our world-view, especially where we operate outside the community structures that gave rise to those systems.

Perhaps my study, like those by Goodman (1960), Henry (1963), Bourdieu (1998), Habermas (1990), suggests that we need to change the way in which organize our society so that authentic art education, or any form of education, can occur. This was Dewey's conclusion as well in Art as Experience (1934). That I have come back to his observation in my study suggests that research into the ways in which education and social systems work, although they are disputatious and unsettling at times, remain a necessary step if we are to see any real possibility of determining how a society can pass on its traditions in an authentic a manner and still allow for a creative future.

In the end the dialogue journal sketchbook, if it did not provide me with the Rosetta stone for a better art education in the studio, was at least an opening into all of these issues.

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